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India beat Bangladesh by 86 runs

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Cong's Nagendra 'mastermind' of Valmiki scam: ED

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Congress MLA B Nagendra is the "mastermind" behind the multi-crore Valmiki Corporation alleged scam and the funds diverted from this state government entity were also used for a candidate who contested the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, the ED claimed Wednesday. The federal agency said it has filed a prosecution complaint or chargesheet in this case some time ago before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Bengaluru. The court has taken cognisance of the chargesheet, it said. Nagendra was arrested by the ED in this case. *—PTI*

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Atishi allegedly evicted from Delhi CM's official house

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi has been evicted from her official residence two days after she moved there, AAP claimed on Wednesday. Delhi chief minister's residence at 6, Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines was forcibly vacated at the behest of BJP as Lt Governor VK Saxena wants to allot it to a saffron party leader, the CMO alleged. Sources at the LG office claimed that the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow is not the official residence of the chief minister and that it has not been allotted to Atishi so far. Atishi kept her belongings there without allotment, the sources said. *—PTI*

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Ratan Tata critical, in ICU at Mumbai hospital

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT 9

Ratan Tata, the chairman emeritus of Tata Sons, one of India's largest and most influential conglomerates, is reportedly in critical condition and receiving intensive care at a Mumbai hospital. On Monday, Tata, known for his philanthropy besides being a respected industry leader, had asserted that there was no cause for concern regarding his health and that he was undergoing check-ups for age-related medical conditions. Terming "rumours" reports of his hospitalisation in a Mumbai hospital, in a post on social media platform X, 86-year-old Tata said, "These claims are unfounded". Reports had claimed that Tata was taken to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital in the early hours of Monday. *—PTI*

Over 100 doctors quit in Bengal over RG Kar horror

KOLKATA, 9 OCT

In a display of solidarity, over 100 senior doctors from four state-run medical colleges and hospitals in West Bengal have submitted mass resignations amid ongoing protests by their junior colleagues. This wave of resignations follows the rape and murder of a junior doctor from RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in August. The total number of senior doctors resigning from six hospitals has now exceeded 200. Among those who resigned recently are 50 senior doctors from Calcutta National Medical College & Hospital (CNMCH), 34 from NRS Medical College & Hospital, 30 from Sagore Dutta Hospital, and 19 from Jalpaiguri Medical College and Hospital. *—PTI*

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RBI keeps repo rate at 6.5% for 10th time

RBI hikes UPI limit, keeps inflation at 4.5%

MUMBAI, 9 OCT

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday for the tenth straight time, but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

The monetary policy committee (MPC), which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repurchase or repo rate - which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent.

Among measures announced Wednesday included doubling of the pre-transaction limit in UPI123Pay (feature phone) to Rs 10,000 and an increase in the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000 from Rs 2,000 and a doubling of per transaction limit to Rs 1,000.

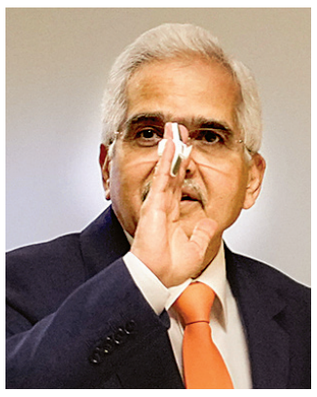

PHOTO: PTI

RBI kept its inflation forecast unchanged at 4.5 per cent for the 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) fis-cal year. It also kept its GDP forecast unchanged at 7.2 per cent in view of prospects of robust private consumption and investment growth.

The panel, however, unanimously decided to change the policy stance to 'neutral' - the first since June 2019 - from 'withdrawal of accommodation' amid signs of a slowing economy. Interest rates were last changed in February 2023 when they were hiked to 6.5 per cent from 6.25 per cent.

The change of stance signals a possible move to cut interest rates in forthcoming MPC meetings, the next being due in early December.

RBI will join other central banks in a policy pivot that was led by the US Federal Reserve easing rates last month. *—PTI*

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LET'S GET FESTIVE!

People in Bengaluru purchase flowers and other pooja materials at KR Market ahead of Ayudha pooja, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

BIDEN, BIBI TALK ISRAEL'S PLANS FOR IRAN ATTACK

WASHINGTON, 9 OCT

President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday were holding their first call in seven weeks, a conversation that comes as Israel expands its ground incursion into Lebanon and considers how to respond to Iran's recent ballistic missile attack.

Netanyahu's office also confirmed that the prime minister had recently spoken with former President Donald Trump. Israel has been discussing how to respond to the Iranian missile barrage, which the us helped to fend off.

Biden last week said he would not support a retaliatory Israeli strike on sites related to Tehran's nuclear programme.

Israel's other choices range from a symbolic strike — similar to how Israel responded after Iran launched missiles and attack drones in April — to hitting oil facilities. *—PTI*

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CM Siddaramaiah, Guv Thawaarchand Gehlot, Maldives Prez Mohamed Muizzu and his wife at Bengaluru's Raj Bhavan on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

K'taka to help Maldives improve IT sector

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday offered to facilitate the growth of the information technology industry in Maldives, and expressed keenness to promote the state's handicraft and handloom products to tourists visiting the island nation.

Addressing a delegation led by Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, who was accompanied by his wife Sajidha Mohamed, at Raj Bhavan here, he said Karnataka, known as the Silicon Valley of India, has devel-oped an ecosystem for start-ups, Artificial Intelligence, global capacity building centres and innovation.

Siddaramaiah said he was pleased to note that Sajidha was a student in Bengaluru.

He said the State would be happy to have trade ties with Maldives to promote the marketing of its hand-icrafts and handlooms to reach out to a large number of tourists visiting the island nation. *—PTI*

CONG MLA VINAY KULKARNI BOOKED FOR RAPE IN B'LURU

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

An FIR has been registered against Congress MLA and former minister Vinay Kulkarni on allegations of rape, kidnapping and criminal intimidation, police said on Wednesday.

The case was booked following a complaint by a 34-year-old social worker at Sanjay Nagar police station, accusing the Dharwad MLA of making phone and video calls to her, they said.

In the FIR, the legislator has been named as accused number one and his close aide Arjun as accused number two, police said. The woman has alleged that she met the MLA in 2022 and accused Kulkarni of making video calls to her and having vulgar conversations with her. She alleged that he took her to a deserted area near the Kempegowda International Airport in Devanahalli where he raped and sexually assaulted her inside the car. He also threatened her to remain quiet. *—PTI*

AAP GOES SOLO IN DELHI, SHUNS 'OVERCONFIDENT' CONG

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Aam Aadmi Party will contest the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections alone against an "overconfident" Congress, a party member said on Wednesday.

"In Delhi, AAP will contest alone. We are capable of fighting the overconfident Congress and arrogant BJP alone," AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said.

She blamed Congress for not taking alliance partners seriously in Haryana and ultimately facing a rout due to its overconfidence.

" Congress has had zero seats in the Delhi assembly for the past 10 years, yet AAP gave Congress three seats in the Lok Sabha polls; still they did not feel necessary to take allies along in Haryana," she said.

Kakkar claimed that Congress thwarted all efforts by the INDIA bloc to forge an alliance in Haryana and "didn't feel it necessary to take its ally along with them."

The AAP and Congress failed to stitch up a pre-poll alliance due to differences over seat sharing. *—PTI*

POLL BATTLE

All 3 Independent MLAs extend support to BJP in Haryana

Devender Kadyan, Savitri Jindal and Rajesh Joon ***PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM AND MYNETA***

CHANDIGARH, 9 OCT

With BJP set to form its government for the third time in Haryana after winning the polls, all the three Independent MLAs— Savitri Jindal, Devender Kadyan and Rajesh Joon— on Wednesday decided to ex-tend support to BJP government once it is sworn in.

While Joon was a Congress rebel, Kadyan fought as an Independent after BJP denied him ticket.

Kadyan fought from the Ganaur in Sonipat and defeated his nearest Congress rival Kuldeep Sharma.

Joon won from the Bahadurgarh seat in the Jhajjar district, defeating his nearest BJP rival Dinesh Kaushik.

Savitri Jindal fought as an Independent candidate from Hisar and won against her nearest Congress rival Ram Niwas Rara. BJP's Kamal Gupta, who was the sitting legislator and minister in the outgoing Saini Cabinet, ended up at the third spot.

Savitri Jindal said she has decided to extend support to the BJP government after it is formed. "I want development for Hisar and want it to become a beautiful city, for this I extend my support," Savitri Jindal said. Bucking anti-incumbency, the ruling BJP pulled off a hat-trick of wins in the state on Tuesday to retain power and thwart Congress' comeback attempt in the assembly elections, winning 48 seats in the 90-member Assembly. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior BJP leaders here on Wednesday ahead of his likely swearing-in as the head of the new government in the state. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

PM Narendra Modi ***PHOTO: PTI***

M'RASHTA: PM OPENS PROJECTS WORTH ₹7.6K CR

NAGPUR, 9 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday virtually laid the foundation stone of various development projects of more than Rs 7,600 crore in Maharashtra.

He laid the foundation stones of the upgradation of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur and the New Integrated Terminal Building at the Shirdi Airport in the state via video conference.

He also virtually inaugurated the Indian Institute of Skills Mumbai and Vidya Samiksha Kendra in Maharashtra and launched 10 new government medical colleges in the state.

The upgradation of the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur will be done with a total estimated project cost of around Rs 7,000 crore, as per officials. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

BREAKTHROUGH IN STRUCTURES

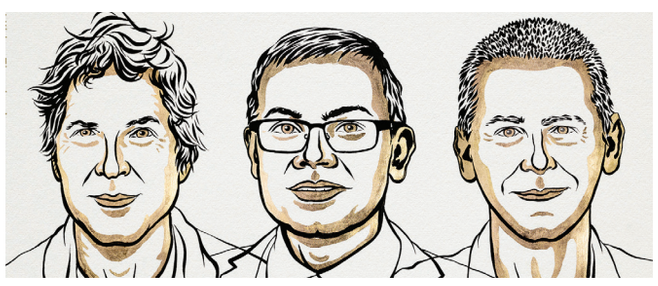
Scientists working on proteins bag Nobel Prize in chemistry

STOCKHOLM, 9 OCT

The Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded Wednesday to three scientists for their breakthrough work predicting and even designing the structure of proteins, the building blocks of life.

The prize was awarded to David Baker, who works at the University of Washington in Seattle, and to Demis Hassabis and John Jumper, who both work at Google DeepMind, a British-American artificial intel-ligence research laboratory based in London.

Heiner Linke, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry, said the award honoured research that made connections between amino acid sequence and protein structure.



David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John M Jumper ***PHOTO: X@NOBELPRIZE***

Baker designed a new protein in 2003 and his research group has since produced one imaginative pro-tein creation after another, including proteins that can be used as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, nano-materials and tiny sensors, the Nobel committee said.

Hassabis and Jumper created an artificial intelligence model that has been able to predict the structure of virtually all the 200 million proteins that researchers have identified, the committee added. Baker gets half of the prize money of 11 million Swedish Kronor ($1 million) while Hassabis and Jumper share the other half. *—PTI*

Bullet-ridden body of missing jawan found

SRINAGAR, 9 OCT

Security forces on Wednesday recovered the bullet-ridden body of a missing soldier from Anantnag dis-trict of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said here.

The body of Territorial Army jawan Hilal Ahmad Bhat, who was reported missing on Tuesday from Shah, was recovered from Sanglan forest area in Utrasoo area of Anantnag, the officials said.

They said the body has been taken to a hospital for medical formalities.

Security forces had launched a massive search operation to trace the jawan.

Bhat was kidnapped by terrorists on Tuesday while he was on his way back to join duty after leave, a neighbour said.

Bhat is survived by his wife, his five-year-old son, Azaan, and an infant daughter. *—PTI*

10 arrested as TN workers protest against Samsung

KANCHIPURAM, 9 OCT

Ten Samsung workers were arrested in Tamil Nadu late on Tuesday night during the ongoing month-long protest by employees of the South Korean electronics giant's plant in Sriperumbudur.

Samsung workers affiliated with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) continued with their strike at the company's plant as the protest entered its 31st day in heavy police presence at the protest site.

The workers have three main demands - better pay, improved work hours, and recognition of their newly formed trade union.

The cops were forced to detain many protesting workers after they indulged in a scuffle with the police who were asking them to move away from certain areas.

Tamil Nadu government said Samsung India Electronics accepted most of the demands of workers, who commenced strike on 9 September.

The government said the Samsung has decided to pay an additional amount of Rs 5,000 as a special incentive every month to the employees from October onwards, and a relief of Rs 1 lakh would be provided in case an employee dies on duty. On Monday, Samsung said it had reached a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with its employees to resolve the protest. However, CITU leaders alleged that Samsung management signed the MoA with workers who were not participating in the strike. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Mother and son die in Kolar road accident

KOLAR, 9 OCT

A mother and her son lost their lives when the two-wheeler they were riding was struck by an unidentified vehicle near Hogalagere Cross in Srinivasapur Taluk. The incident occurred around 8.30pm on Tuesday. The deceased are Padmamma,48, her son Raghu,22, both residents of Kethaganahalli in Srinivasapur Taluk According to sources, Padmamma had been unwell, and her son Raghu, an agriculturist, had taken her to a hospital. While returning, an unidentified vehicle collided with their two-wheeler, killing them on the spot. *—Salar News*

Azim Foundation gives ₹500cr grant to CMC Vellore

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Christian Medical College Vellore on Wednesday said it plans to set up a new medical college and a teaching hospital at Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, for which the Azim Premji Foundation will support it with a Rs 500 crore grant. As part of the agreement, the Foundation will extend a Rs 500 crore grant to CMC Vellore to set up the medical college and upgrade the existing 120-bed hospital into a teaching hospital with 422 beds, it said. The grant will also enable CMC Vellore to extend the "distinctive elements" of its MBBS education and focus on the discipline of Primary-cum-Secondary Health Care (PSHC) to address the widening disparities in the Indian healthcare sector, it said in a release. Principal of CMC Vellore, Solomon Sathishkumar said education at the Chittoor campus began with allied health science courses and a college of nursing five years ago. *—PTI*

Don't use drones to film Dasara show: CESC

MYSURU, 9 OCT

The Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) has issued a warning that legal action will be taken against individuals or agencies who will be caught filming or distributing videos of its drone shows during the Dasara Torchlight Parade without permission. This decision follows the widespread circulation of videos from CESC's successful drone shows held on 6 and 7 October at the Torchlight Parade Grounds, which garnered significant public appreciation. Many of these videos were shared on social media platforms without authorization. CESC introduced the drone show as a new feature of the Dasara festivities this year, and additional shows are scheduled for 11 and 12 October at the same venue. *—Salar News*

HP to emulate K'taka's skill dvpt initiatives

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

The Himachal Pradesh government is actively exploring the adoption of several skill development programmes and initiatives from the State. Himachal Pradesh's minister for town planning, housing, and technical education, Rajesh Kumar Dharmani, lauded Karnataka's efforts to enhance employability skills. He evinced keen interest in implementing similar strategies in his home state after discussions with his counterpart Sharan Prakash Patil. Dharmani, was impressed by the International Migration Centre-Karnataka (IMC-K), which has facilitated the employment of skilled workers—such as drivers, nurses, fitters, and technicians—in countries like the UAE. *—PTI*

MLA Nagendra mastermind of Valmiki scam, says ED

ED says the funds were used for a Lok Sabha candidate

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

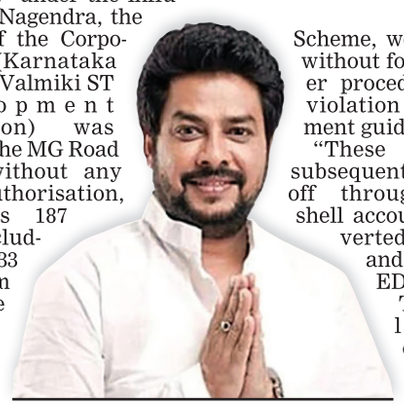
Congress MLA B Nagendra is the "mastermind" behind the multi-crore Valmiki Corporation alleged scam and the funds diverted from this state government entity were also used for a candidate who contested the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, the ED claimed Wednesday.

The federal agency said it has filed a prosecution complaint or charge sheet in this case some time ago before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Bengaluru. The court has taken cognisance of the chargesheet, it said.

"B Nagendra, MLA and former Minister for Scheduled Tribal Affairs, has been named as the primary ac-cused and mastermind behind the scam, allegedly orchestrating it with the help of 24 others, including key associates like Satyanarayana Varma, Etakari Satyanarayana, JG Padmanabha, Nageshwar Rao, Nekkenti Nagaraj, and Vijay Kumar Gowda," the Enforcement Directorate said in a statement.

Nagendra was arrested by the ED in this case.

The agency claimed its probe found that "under the influence of B Nagendra, the account of the Corporation (Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation) was moved to the MG Road Branch without any proper authorisation, where Rs 187 crore, including Rs. 43.33 crore from the state treasury under the Ganga Kalyana Scheme, were deposited without following proper procedures and in violation of government guidelines.



- Additionally, Rs 88.62 crore was illegally deposited into various accounts of some Information Technology (IT) companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank

"These funds were subsequently siphoned off through multiple shell accounts and converted into cash and bullion," the ED alleged.

The money laundering case stems from an FIR of the Karnataka Police and the CBI where it was alleged that around Rs 89.62 crore were diverted from the Corporation's accounts into "fake accounts" across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and later laundered through shell entities.

The alleged irregularities came to fore after accounts superintendent of the Corporation, Chandrasekharan P was found dead on 21 May. He wrote a suicide note alleging illegal transfer of money from the Corporation to various bank accounts.

Chandrasekharan alleged that there was an unauthorised transfer of Rs 187 crore belonging to the state-run Corporation from its bank account. Additionally, Rs 88.62 crore was illegally deposited into various accounts of some Information Technology (IT) companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank. *—PTI*

LEADERS REACT

'Haryana results will have no impact on caste census'

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Priyank Kharge PHOTO: FB

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge on Wednesday said that Haryana Assembly election results will have no impact on the commitment of the Congress government in the State on the issue of caste census.

Cabinet is "most likely" to discuss the Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, also known as "caste census", based on a survey conducted in 2014-15 in the State, on 18 October.

"Caste census is not merely to figure out numbers, it helps the government to devise better policies, schemes and in better governance ..." he said, as he termed difference of opinion among leaders from Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities within ruling Congress on caste census as "diversity", "while you call it different opinions".

Noting that the BJP is claiming moral high ground and demanding Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resigna-tion on the MUDA issue, Kharge urged the Opposition party to look within their outfit pointing at state BJP President BY Vijayendra's election affidavit in which he has clearly mentioned about an ED (En-forcement Directorate) case against him.

He further pointed out that Vijayendra's father and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa is facing a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences case. "...you are going around and giving us moral lectures. What morality do they have?"

> **In Haryana, I think we had overconfidence in the election procedure and that we are going to come back. That is the major disadvantage that we are facing**
>
> -DK Suresh, Former Cong MP

Meanwhile, Former Congress MP DK Suresh said that overconfidence within the party had led to the loss in Haryana assembly elections.

"In J&K, the people have given us a good mandate where the INDIA alliance is going to form the govt. In Haryana, I think we had overconfidence in the election procedure and that we are going to come back. That is the major disadvantage that we are facing. Our party's high command will discuss the length and breadth of the defeat and lapses of the election..." he said. *—Agencies*

CHAOS AMID FESTIVAL

'Black-flag protest if Guv attends Dasara'

MYSURU, 9 OCT

State Backward Classes Awareness Forum Chief and a staunch supporter of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, KS Shivaramu, on Wednesday said that a black flag demonstration would be held against Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot if he attends the Dasara Torchlight Parade at Bannimantap during the conclusion of the nine-day Dasara festivities on 12 October.

Speaking at a press conference, Shivaramu accused the Governor of attempting to destabilise the government by misusing his constitutional powers. He also warned of a postcard campaign urging the Presi-dent of India to take action against Gehlot. The postcards, which will be posted from Ramaswamy Circle, will accuse Gehlot of acting as a political agent of the BJP-JD(S) alliance under the influence of the central government, rather than fulfilling his constitutional duties.

Shivaramu also criticised Gehlot for granting permission to prosecute Siddaramaiah in connection with alleged irregularities involving the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). He noted that similar prosecution requests by the Lokayukta against BJP and JD(S) leaders, including Union Minister HD Ku-maraswamy and Shashikala Jolle, remain pending.Convener of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (DSS), Devagalli Somashekhar urged the government to release the findings of the caste census without succumbing to political pressure, including from upper castes. He further said that presenting the caste census in the Assembly is crucial to ensure that all receive benefits based on their population. *—Salar News*

Siddaramaiah PHOTO: PTI

Outsourced workers protest against Bidar model proposal

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Thousands of outsourced employees working for urban local bodies across the State staged a protest in the City on Wednesday, demanding that the government drop the proposed Bidar model society system. The protest was organised by the Karnataka State Municipal Corporation and Town Panchayat Outsourcing Employees Association and called for the immediate approval of the long-pending direct payment file for outsourced workers.

The protesters criticised the government's proposed solution of creating a labour society to manage payments, claiming it is a step backward. They argued that instead of addressing the real issue of de-layed payments, the government is effectively becoming a contractor, violating the spirit of the Contract Labour Abolition Act, which mandates equal pay for equal work.

The protesting workers' demand include, the immediate approval of the direct payment file for out-sourced employees and the issuance of a hardship allowance for those working in urban local bodies. They also requested that outsourced cleaning workers receive half of the benefits available under the Griha Bhagya Yojana, a welfare scheme to support vulnerable workers. *—Salar News*

People throng markets to buy ash gourds and flowers ahead of Ayudha pooja at KR Market in Bengaluru on Wednesday. Ayudha pooja is celebrated on Friday as part of the Navratri festival PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD

Rly to operate special trains for Dasara festivities

MYSURU, 9 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

In view of the Dasara festival, South Western Railway (SWR) has decided to run special trains from Mys-uru to various destinations across the State to manage the increased rush of passengers.

Train No. 07307 Belagavi to Mysuru will run three trips, starting from 10-12 October. The train will de-part from Belagavi at 5.30pm arriving in Mysuru at 6.25am the following day. The return train, Train No. 07308 Mysuru to Belagavi, will depart from Mysuru at 10.30pm and arrive in Belagavi at 7.00am the next day. Train No. 06281 Mysuru to Chamarajanagar will operate five trips from 9-13 October. The train will depart from Mysuru at 11.30pm arriving in Chamarajanagar the following day at 1.30amhrs. The return journey, Train No. 06282 Chamarajanagar to Mysuru, will depart from Chamarajanagar at 4,15am and arrive in Mysuru at 6.00am. SWR is also operating two special train services between Mysuru and Bengaluru from 9-13 October.

Train No. 06279 Mysuru to Bengaluru will depart from Mysuru at 11.15pm and arrive at KSR Bengaluru at 2.30am. For the return journey, Train No. 06280 KSR Bengaluru to Mysuru will depart from KSR Benga-luru at 3am and arrive in Mysuru at 6.15pm.

Train No. 06285 KSR Bengaluru to Mysuru will depart from KSR Bengaluru at 12.15am and arrive in Mysuru at 3.20pm. The return train, Train No. 06286 Mysuru to KSR Bengaluru, will depart from Mysuru at 3.30pm and arrive at KSR Bengaluru at 7.15pm. *—PTI*

10 PAK NATIONALS HELD NEAR CITY

BENGALURU, 9 0CT

Ten more Pakistani nationals have been arrested on charges of staying illegally in India on fake documents, police said on Wednesday. With this, the total number of Pakistani citizens held in connection with illegal stay by police in Jigani on Bengaluru outskirts has reached 17, they said. The latest arrests came after police held a man named Parvez who had allegedly helped and harboured 22 Pakistani citizens settle in Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka with Hindu names, police said. "In a fresh case registered in this regard, 10 Pakistani nationals, including six women were arrested on Tuesday from Jigani jurisdiction (near Bengaluru). They have been arrested on charges of illegally staying in India on fake and forged documents. Some of them were also found to be overtsaying illegally," a senior police officer told PTI. A few among the arrested were using Hindu names, while others had stuck to their original ones, he said. Recently, four members of a family, who were Pakistani citizens, were arrested in Jigani. Following their arrest and interrogation, three more Pakistani citizens were arrested at Peenya here by Jigani police. *—PTI*

KDA condemns HAL for 'misleading' recruitments

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

Purushottama PHOTO: FB

Kannada Development Authority (KDA) has strongly criticised Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for providing misleading information regarding the recruitment of local Kannadigas for Group 'C' positions. KDA Chairman Dr Purushottama Bilimale condemned HAL's failure to honour its commitment to recruit local candidates through job exchange centre and local newspapers, describing it as an attempt to mis-lead the government.

Speaking during a meeting with representatives of HAL's Central Kannada Sangh on Wednesday, Bilimale revealed that more than 90 vacancies, which were supposed to be filled by Kannadigas, were not offered to local candidates as promised. "It is unfortunate that HAL has provided false information about its re-cruitment process. This is a betrayal of local candidates, and KDA will conduct a review of HAL's hiring practices," he said. He condemned the company for holding written examinations for fixed-term positions in English and Hindi, completely excluding Kannada. He also highlighted the example set by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), noting that BEL requires candidates to register with the Karnataka State Job Exchange Centre during recruitment, ensuring that local candidates have better access to job opportunities. *—Salar News*

NEW INITIATIVE

City gets next-gen AI-powered traffic system

BENGALURU, 9 OCT

To address the increasing traffic challenges, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) on Wednesday announced the implementation of the Bengaluru Adaptive Traffic Control System (BATCS), a cutting-edge technology designed to streamline traffic flow and reduce delays city-wide.

BATCS aims to revolutionise traffic management in the city through real-time Artificial Intelligence-powered traffic signal control systems, officials said.

The BATCS project, initiated in May 2024, includes the upgradation of 136 existing junctions and the in-stallation of 29 new ones, covering a total of 165 traffic signals.

This 'ambitious project' utilises Centre for Development of Advanced Computing's (C-DAC) indigenously developed CoSiCoSt ATCS application, which is tailored specifically to manage India's heterogeneous and often unpredictable traffic conditions.

60 junctions have been successfully upgraded in key areas such as Basavanagudi, Jayanagar, JP Nagar and Hudson Circle PHOTO: X

"Bengaluru Traffic Police shall expand the system for balance 400 junctions in a phased manner. Upon completion, the city will have a comprehensive, city-wide AI Powered intelligent traffic signal control system that significantly reduces delays, improves journey times, and provides a safer road environment for all users," Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda told reporters here. According to Joint Commissioner of Police for Bengaluru City Traffic, MN Anucheth, BATCS stands out from the previous traffic management systems used in the city due to its unique capabilities and use of AI technology.

As of today, 60 junctions have been successfully upgraded in key areas such as Basavanagudi, Jayanagar. JP Nagar, and Hudson Circle.

BTP said they are closely coordinating with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike for smoother execution of the project. *—PTI*

INDIA bloc flexes muscles after Cong's Haryana failure

Allies blame Congress' arrogance and over-confidence

Several Opposition leaders accused the Congress of banking on regional parties where it is weak but not forging alliances when they perceive they are strong in a state **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

After the Congress' shock defeat in Haryana, the Opposition INDIA bloc parties flexed their muscles on Wednesday, accusing the grand old party of ignoring them. They said this attitude should not be repeated in the future polls.

Shiv Sena (UBT) turned out to be the biggest critic of the Congress, accusing it of ignoring other parties that resulted in the poll debacle. Leaders of the TMC, AAP, CPI(M), CPI and some other parties also blamed the Congress for working alone and not jointly, which led to the defeat in Haryana.

Congress will be contesting the Maharashtra polls as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance and the Jharkhand elections in tie-up with the JMM, which is also a part of the INDIA bloc.

Several Opposition leaders accused the Congress of banking on regional parties where it is weak but not forging alliances when they perceive they are strong in a state.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said the Congress' "over confidence" was responsible for its defeat in Haryana, alleging that it relies on allies only in regions where they are weak but ignores them in its stronghold areas.

"Wherever the Congress is weak, it takes help from the regional parties. But where it thinks it is strong, the Congress attaches no importance to the regional parties," Raut said.

A senior leader of the TMC who did not want to be named spoke on similar lines, saying the Congress lost again when it was a straight fight with the BJP and the regional parties do much better in defeating the BJP.

TMC leader said the Congress reached out to the INDIA parties after facing losses in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. CPI(M) said the results in both Haryana and J&K are a lesson for the secular forces rallying against the BJP. *—PTI*

> **Arrogance, entitlement and looking down on regional parties is a recipe for disaster**
>
>
>
> -Saket Gokhale, TMC MP

CONG ANALYSING 'UNEXPECTED' RESULTS: RAHUL

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said the party was analysing the "unexpected" results in Haryana and will apprise the Election Commission about complaints received from various constituencies of the state.

In his first reaction after the shock defeat in Haryana, the former Congress president also thanked the people of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir for their support.

"My heartfelt thanks to the people of Jammu and Kashmir - INDIA's victory in the state is a victory of the Constitution, a victory of democratic self-respect," he said.

Gandhi said the Congress was looking into the results of the Haryana Assembly polls.

"We are analysing the unexpected results of Haryana. We will inform the Election Commission about the complaints coming from many assembly constituencies," he said.

"Heartfelt thanks to all the people of Haryana for their support and to our 'Babbar Sher' workers for their tireless hard work," he said in a post in Hindi on X. *—PTI*

Cong's reaction to Haryana results 'unheard' in democratic system: EC

Election Commission on Wednesday dubbed 'Haryana results unacceptable' statement of senior Congress leaders as "unheard in the rich democratic heritage" of the country and far from a legitimate part of free speech. In a letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, EC said such remarks by party leaders Jairam Ramesh and Pawan Khera move towards "an undemocratic rejection of the will of the people" expressed in accordance with the statutory and regulatory electoral framework. The Commission said it has also noted the statements of Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, terming the Haryana results as "unexpected" and that the party proposes to analyse the same and approach the EC with its complaints. The EC said it has received a request seeking a meeting time for a 12-member official INC delegation, including those who made the "results unacceptable" statement. *—PTI*

HARYANA VERDICT

People won't back Cong's hatred & urban Naxals: PM

NAGPUR, 9 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said BJP's victory in Haryana elections shows the mood in the country and the people have shown they will not fall prey to the hateful conspiracies of Congress and "urban Naxals".

Congress is an irresponsible party and a factory to "spread hatred" which wants to divide Hindus and pit one community against another, Modi said after virtually launching various development projects of more than Rs 7,600 crore in the Maharashtra.

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) wants to weaken Maharashtra to gain power, but the ruling Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) is determined to strengthen the state, he said.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly are likely to be held next month.

Modi said, "Never in the history of Maharashtra has development taken place at such a fast pace, on such a large scale, in different sectors. During the Congress rule, such speed and scale was seen in different sectors in corruption."

Further targeting Congress, Modi cautioned against those who play divisive politics and mislead voters for personal gains.

Congress wanted to induce fear among Muslims in the country and convert them into vote bank, he said and also accused the opposition party of indulging in caste politics to divide Hindus for political gains.

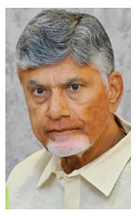
BJP has won the Haryana assembly elections, he said, adding that "in Maharashtra we have to get a bigger victory."

Congress used all tactics to provoke the people of Haryana, but they have shown that they will not fall prey to the hateful conspiracies of Congress and "urban Naxals", he said. *—PTI*

PM Narendra Modi speaks at the inauguration event **PHOTO: PTI**

- Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) wants to weaken Maharashtra to gain power, but the ruling Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP) is determined to strengthen the state, he said.

> **Like Haryana, where development won, Mahayuti will emerge victorious with a thumping majority in Maharashtra**
>
>
>
> -Eknath Shinde, Maharashtra Chief Minister

> **Maharashtra and Jharkhand would also yield the same result, I don't have any doubt. I am confident that it will happen**
>
> 
>
> -N Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister

AFSPA extended in 4 Assam districts for 6 more months

GUWAHATI, 9 OCT

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA was extended in four districts of Assam for six months in view of the "recent disturbances" in Bangladesh and its potentially inimical effect on the internal law and order situation, according to a notification issued on Tuesday. The districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo and Sivasagar will remain "disturbed area" under the AFSPA, it said. The AFSPA was first imposed in Assam in November 1990 and has been extended every six months since then. The Act empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior warrant. It also gives a certain level of immunity to the security forces in case of an operation going wrong. *—PTI*

Modi to have bilateral meetings in Vientiane: MEA

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold bilateral meetings with the prime minister of Lao PDR and other leaders on the margins of two key summits he is slated to attend in Vientiane on 10-11 October, the external affairs ministry said on Wednesday. Modi will attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit in Lao PDR, the current Chair of the 10-nation grouping."We attach great significance to all ASEAN-related mechanisms. This will be PM's tenth attendance at an ASEAN-India Summit," Secretary (East) in the MEA, Jaideep Mazumdar said at a briefing here. The Summit in Vientiane will review the progress in India-ASEAN ties and "chart the future direction of our relationship", Mazumdar said. The member States are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, India, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Brunei Darussalam. *—PTI*

SP declares candidates for 6 UP bypoll seats

LUCKNOW, 9 OCT

A day after declaration of assembly poll results of Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, the Samajwadi Party on Wednesday announced candidates for six of the 10 Uttar Pradesh assembly seats where bypolls are due later this year. Reacting to the list, BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said it is the effect of Haryana election results, with the SP "telling Congress its place" by declaring candidates on the seats claimed by the latter. The SP, which is a part of the INDIA bloc, has said it will contest the bypolls with the Congress, which is demanding five seats from the party. The official date for polls is yet to be announced. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Firm linked to AAP MP caused loss to Punjab govt: ED

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

A company linked to AAP MP from Punjab Sanjeev Arora and some other entities caused "loss" to the state government and generated "huge" proceeds of crime by misusing industrial lands for residential projects, the ED alleged Wednesday. The federal agency had raided the premises of Arora, also a businessman, that of a company promoted by him -- Hampton Sky Reality (erstwhile Ritesh Properties Industries Limited or RPIL) -- and others like Hemant Sood and Chander Shekhar Aggarwal on 7 October in Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Delhi and Gurugram. It also raided another company named Royal Industries Ltd (RIL), and its directors Gurmeet Singh and Pardeep Kumar Aggarwal on the same day. *—PTI*

Resolution on statehood restoration soon: Omar

Omar Abdullah **PHOTO: PTI**

SRINAGAR, 9 OCT

National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said NC-Congress government will pass a resolution demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in its first cabinet meeting.

"After the formation of the government, I hope in the first cabinet meeting, the cabinet will pass a resolution impressing upon the Centre to restore the statehood. The government should then take that resolution to the prime minister," Abdullah told reporters here.

He expressed hope that the government in Jammu and Kashmir will be able to run smoothly unlike in Delhi.

"There is a difference between us and Delhi. Delhi was never a state. No one promised Delhi statehood. Jammu and Kashmir was a state before 2019. Three steps will be taken in J&K -"Delimitation, election and then statehood." Abdullah said the NC would call a meeting of the legislative party on Thursday to start the process of government formation. To a question about whether PDP would be a part of the coalition government, the NC leader said there were no discussions over that as of now. "At some points of time, if a channel of communication opens, we will sit down and talk to them. But it is not a priority for us at the moment," he said. Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra said the party would introspect its dismal performance in the assembly polls in the Jammu region.

Meanwhile, NCP, Farooq Abdullah said that "We have to minimise the differences that they have created between Jammu, and Kashmir. Our endeavour should be that the Hindus there have this confidence in us that we will think about them in the same manner as about Kashmir." *—PTI*

ATISHI FORCED TO VACATE

A pickup truck carrying goods leaves from 6, Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines, the official residence of Chief Minister of Delhi, in New Delhi, on Wednesday. AAP on Wednesday alleged that officers are not allotting the bungalow to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi (inset) due to BJP's pressure, and her belongings were also removed from the residence **PHOTO: PTI**

Wangchuk continues hunger strike for day 4

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Sonam Wangchuk , who is on a hunger strike for the last four days, on Wednesday said a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh came to him last night, extended his support, and also gave him some mosquito repellent.

"Someone came around 10.30-11 pm, and brought herbal mosquito repellent for us. He stayed away from the gate, and said he did not want to be captured in any CCTV camera," Wangchuk, on strike with several of his supporters since Sunday, said on X.

"He said he is with the RSS, and close to BJP. He said we have our sympathy with you, and people of Ladakh, but we cannot come out openly," he said.

HC seeks police stand on denial to Sonam's protest

Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the stand of Delhi police on a plea seeking permission for climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and others to hold a peaceful protest at the city's Jantar Mantar.

PHOTO: PTI

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma issued notice on the plea filed by Apex Body Leh to the police and the Delhi government and sought their responses."Let response to the petition be filed," said the bench and posted the hearing on 22 October.

Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, who was representing Delhi Police, said there was no urgency in the matter. The petition was listed for hearing after the petitioner's counsel mentioned it for urgent listing before a bench headed by Chief Justice Manmohan.

The plea stated that Delhi Police failed to provide any valid ground for denying the request. *—PTI*

OFF TO A NEW START

Ex-Kerala DGP Sreelekha joins BJP

T'PURAM, 9 OCT

Former DGP R Sreelekha, the first woman IPS officer in the Kerala cadre, joined the BJP on Wednesday.

She took party membership at her residence here from BJP state president K Surendran and district president V V Rajesh.

Expressing happiness over Sreelekha's entry into the party, Surendran said that the BJP will greatly benefit from the experience of the retired DGP, who had an unblemished record as a police officer.

"More and more eminent personalities are now joining the BJP. You (the media) have been trying to portray the BJP as an untouchable party. Now the situation has changed. We are working hard to come to power in Kerala by 2026," Surendran told reporters.

Sreelekha said that it took her three weeks to decide after the BJP leaders approached her with a request.

BJP Kerala President K Surendra and others with former IPS R Sreelekha after she joined the party **PHOTO: PTI**

She said it was the aura of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that influenced her to join the BJP.

"I do not expect anything from the party. I see this as another opportunity to serve the people. I am not thinking about any position in the party; I am joining them because I trust their ideology," Sreelekha said.

She also said that she never had any political thoughts after taking the oath as a police officer and had worked neutrally without any political bias.

Sreelekha said that she would continue to work for the people. *—PTI*

Anvar swallows pride, says sorry to Vijayan

T'PURAM, 9 OCT

Independent MLA P V Anvar on Wednesday issued an apology for his derogatory remarks against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

In a Facebook video message, Anvar, who made the controversial remarks earlier in the day, explained that it was a slip of the tongue.

In the video, Anvar claimed that the chief minister had made remarks portraying him as a thief.

"In my statement, what I meant was that I would respond to anyone, no matter how senior they are, even if they are above the chief minister," said the Nilambur MLA.

"I deeply regret how my words came out. I sincerely apologise to the chief minister, his family, and everyone. I am expressing my regret and asking for genuine forgiveness," he said in the video message.

The CPI(M) cut ties with Anvar after he launched attacks against CM Vijayan, his close confidants, and the party, on various issues. After that, Anvar launched a social collective called the Democratic Movement of Kerala (DMK).

Before launching the collective, Anvar visited Chennai and met with leaders of the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of Tamil Nadu. However, the DMK has reportedly distanced itself from Anvar.

The MLA arrived at the Assembly on Wednesday wearing a DMK shawl around his neck and carrying a red towel. *—PTI*

MLA Anwar **PHOTO: PTI**

UDF rejects Thrissur Pooram probe

The disruption of the iconic Thrissur Pooram festival ignited a heated debate in Kerala Assembly on Wednesday, as the opposition UDF alleged it occurred with the knowledge of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, while the ruling LDF dismissed calls for a judicial probe. UDF alleged in House that since it was disrupted with active knowledge of Vijayan, any probe ordered by him was untrustworthy. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Vistara's London to Delhi flight receives bomb threat

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

A Vistara aircraft flying from London to Delhi received a bomb threat on Wednesday and the plane landed safely at the airport in the national capital, according to sources. The sources said that a piece of paper with the message about a bomb onboard the plane was found in one of the lavatories and the relevant authorities were immediately informed. There were nearly 290 passengers in the aircraft, they added.

An airline spokesperson said a security concern was noted by its staff operating the flight UK 018 while it was coming from London to the national capital. In line with the protocol, the relevant authorities were immediately informed and the aircraft was taken to the isolation bay for mandatory checks. *—PTI*

Clean mess if you want poll results: Delhi HC to DUSU

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) candidates to clean all campus structures defaced during the polls if they wanted vote count take place. The High Court, which had on 26 September halted the counting of votes and declaration of results of DUSU and colleges elections, said its purpose was only to send a message that such violations would not be tolerated and not to thwart the election process.

"Why don't you clean up the mess. The day the place is cleaned up, we will allow the counting of votes the very next day," a bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said. The court was hearing an application filed by two candidates who contested the college elections in two separate DU colleges, seeking declaration of results. The court granted time to the candidates, petitioner, MCD, and DMRC to file their status reports and listed the matter for 21 October. *—PTI*

4 foreigners stranded on trek in Chamoli rescued

DEHRADUN, 9 OCT

Four foreign tourists stranded on the Neelkanth trek in Chamoli district were rescued on Wednesday, officials said. The three Brazilians and one Spanish were brought safely to Badrinath, they said. The four were identified as Joseph, 56, from Spain, and Paulo, 39, Rodrio, 38, Danilo, 43, from Brazil. The tourists had got stranded on the Neelkanth trek late Tuesday night, they said. They tourists were traced by the police and SDRF after hours-long search carried out in pitch dark amid adverse weather conditions, they said. *—PTI*

MCD seals 84 factories for norm violations

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

The MCD has sealed 84 factories and disconnected the electricity supply to several industrial units across the city for violating norms, a civic body official said on Wednesday. The crackdown comes as part of a citywide effort to curb industrial pollution and regulate illegal operations in non-conforming areas, the official said. In September, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) conducted inspections of 520 industrial units located in non-conforming zones -- areas where 70 per cent of the plots are used for industrial purposes allowed under zoning regulations. Of these, 84 units were found to be in violation of the prescribed norms and were subsequently sealed. As per the official, more action is underway, particularly targeting the Rithala area in north west Delhi, where further violations are expected to be addressed in the coming weeks. *—PTI*

RG Kar: 11 DNA proofs seal Sanjay Roy's fate

CBI lists 'sole accused' Roy's blood, hair and saliva on victim's body as evidence

KOLKATA, 9 OCT

The CBI has listed 11 pieces of evidence, such as reports of DNA and blood samples, in its charge sheet to hold arrested Kolkata Police civic volunteer Sanjay Roy as the "sole accused" in the rape and murder of a woman doctor at the RG Kar hospital.

The agency mentioned the presence of his DNA on the body of the victim, short hair, injuries on his body, blood stains of the victim, the CCTV footage and the location of his mobile phone as per the call detail records as evidence against Roy.

The chargesheet, a copy of which is with PTI, also mentioned that Roy sustained "blunt force injuries consistent with the marks of resistance/struggle by the victim".

The central probe agency has referred to the deceased woman 'V' in its charge sheet submitted before a local court here on Monday.

"(There were) presence of his DNA on the reference DNA/questioned DNA detected from the dead body of the 'V' during autopsy...the presence of blood stains of 'V' on his jeans and footwear which were recovered by the local police on August 12 in pursuance of his disclosure statement.

The short hair found from the SoC has matched with accused Sanjay Roy," the charge sheet said.

"(There was) pairing of one bluetooth earphone found from the scene of crime (SoC) with the seized mobile phone of accused Sanjoy Roy as per CFSL (Central Forensic Science Laboratory) reports. The central probe agency mentioned that the "cause of death was due to asphyxia as a combined effect of throttling (manual strangulation) and smothering".

"The injuries related to hymen, which were fresh in origin, clearly indicated that the victim had suffered forceful penetrative sexual assault. It is further corroborated with the report of swab taken from (the) area around both nipples showing the presence of saliva belonging to Sanjay Roy as confirmed by DNA." *—PTI*

Accused Sanjay Roy also sustained blunt force injuries **PHOTO: PTI**

Bengal govt forms SIT to probe Kultali rape-murder case

Kolkata, 9 Oct

West Bengal government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe into the alleged rape-murder of a 10-year-old girl in the South 24 Parganas district's Kultuli area, an official said. The SIT will be led by Baruipur SP Palash Chandra Dhali, he said. "We want to assure the locals of our commitment to ensuring justice and punishing those responsible for this crime," the official said on Tuesday. So far, the police have arrested one person in connection with the case. The incident, which occurred on 5 October, sparked widespread protests across the state, with locals setting vehicles ablaze, vandalising a police outpost, and blocking roads in the area after the girl's body was found in a pond. *—PTI*

CBI to probe WB woman's 'torture' in police custody

KOLKATA, 9 OCT

Calcutta High Court has ordered a CBI investigation into the alleged custodial torture of a woman who was arrested over the protests against the rape and murder of a doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Two petitioners, both women, alleged physical abuse by the police during their detention, the court said, while noting that a report of a jail official confirmed such act on one of them.

Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj on Tuesday directed the CBI to conduct a thorough investigation into the alleged physical torture that took place during police custody of one of them from 8 September to 11 September.

Justice Bharadwaj said that given the alleged involvement of police authorities, an investigation by a local law enforcement agency might present a conflict of interest.

The two petitioners submitted that they participated in several peaceful rallies demanding justice in the brutal rape and murder of the doctor at the RG Kar hospital on August 9.

The court directed the investigating officer of the CBI to file a report before it by 15 November. The matter will appear for hearing again on 18 November, the court directed. *—PTI*

Minor gangraped in Gujarat; hunt on for 3

SURAT, 9 OCT

A teenager was allegedly raped by three persons when she was out with a friend during the ongoing Navratri festival in Gujarat's Surat district, police said Wednesday.

The 17-year-old was allegedly sexually assaulted in a deserted place on the outskirts of Mota Borsara village in Mangrol taluka within the jurisdiction of Kosamba police station around 11 pm on Tuesday, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Hitesh Joysar said.

The alleged crime comes days after a teenager was gang-raped on the outskirts of Vadodara when she was out with her friend.

"The teen had gone to Kim to meet her friends after attending her coaching class. At around 10.30 pm, she had ice cream with her two friends. She and her (male) friend were then sitting in a deserted place on their way to a petrol pump along the highway near Mota Borsara village when three men approached them," the SP said.

The trio grabbed the girl while her friend escaped, the police official said. They took turns to rape her before fleeing with her and her friend's mobile phones, he said.

Considering the sensitivity of the case, senior police officials, including Range IG and Superintendent of Police, reached the alleged crime scene. More than ten teams have been formed to crack the case. *—PTI*

The 17-year-old was allegedly sexually assaulted in a deserted place on the outskirts of Mota Borsara village in Gujarat, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Delhi: 3 refugees injured in acid attack, 1 held

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Three refugees, including a Syrian national and a 11-month-old child, suffered burns as they were attacked with acid during an argument with residents in west Delhi's Vikaspuri, police said on Wednesday.

The child was admitted to Safdarjung Hospital for treatment and was discharged today, they said.

An FIR has been lodged and a local resident, Rakesh Kumar, has been arrested in the matter, according to a police statement.

The incident took place on September 30 near the UNHRC (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) office located at Vikaspuri, they said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said a PCR call was received regarding a brawl between the refugees and local residents.

PHOTO: PTI

A police team reached the spot and found that during the altercation, Kumar brought a can and threw some chemical at the three refugees and on the tentage where a few of them were residing.

Veer said on primary examination, the liquid appeared to be phenyl, but the exact composition will be established only on chemical examination.

Among the three refugees, one is a Syrian national, a police source said.

An FIR was lodged under appropriate sections of criminal law on 1 October and the accused was arrested, the DCP said. *—PTI*

YAMUNA FOAMS AGAIN

Fishermen row their boat through toxic foam in the Yamuna river, in New Delhi, Wednesday. The toxic foam is due to the high phosphate content, which can cause skin and respiratory problems. The river has been plagued by the dumping of untreated sewage from areas around Delhi. Despite assurances, the Delhi government has taken no action to clean up the river **PHOTO: PTI**

Hindu body says 'illegal mosque' in U'khand home

PITHORAGARH, 9 OCT

An inquiry has been ordered after members of an Hindu outfit staged a protest outside the SDM's office in Berinag demanding removal of an 'illegal' mosque being run in a house, officials said on Wednesday.

According to the protestors, an abandoned house in Berinag has allegedly been converted illegally into a mosque from inside to offer Namaz.

Levelling the allegation, the Hindu outfit Rashtriya Sewa Sangathan staged a protest outside Berinag SDM's office on October 6 demanding removal of the illegal mosque.

An inquiry was ordered into the allegation after a memorandum was received from the organisation, Pithoragarh District Magistrate Vinod Girish Goswami said.

"We have demanded removal of the illegal mosque. If it continues to run, we will have to resort to a nationwide agitation against it," Himanshu Joshi, said. *—PTI*

'RENAME URDU TERMS'

Kumbh: Akhara to ban food stalls by 'non-Sanatanis'

The seers' body said it will pass a resolution on the food stall criteria after Diwali and submit it to the chief minister for approval **PHOTO: PTI**

PRAYAGRAJ, 9 OCT

Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad on Wednesday said it has decided to not allow "non-Sanatanis" from putting up food stalls in the Kumbh Mela and rename terms 'Shahi Snan' and 'Peshwai' as 'Rajsi Snan' and 'Chhavni Pravesh'.

The parishad said it has proposed the change of the Urdu terms to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who wold soon make an announcement. The seers' body said it will pass a resolution on the food stall criteria after Diwali and submit it to the chief minister for approval.

It added that it will also pass a resolution to allow deployment of only 'Sanatani' employees and officers in the Kumbh Mela so that the fair's integrity is maintained.

Last month, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had announced to call Mahakal's procession in Ujjain as 'Rajsi Sawaari' instead of 'Shahi Sawaari', after which the Akhara Parishad also stressed on the use of Hindi instead of Urdu.

The bath of the saints of the Akharas is called 'Shahi Snan' and the procession from the ashram of the Akhara to the fair area is called 'Peshwai'. This tradition has been going on for centuries.

Puri opposed the setting up food stalls by people of other religions in Kumbh Mela, citing the recent incidents of adulteration of food items at various places in the country.

Meanwhile, the body has decided to put on Kumbh duty to policemen who do not consume meat, alcohol. *—PTI*

Police to probe 20, including Malayalam actors in drug case

KOCHI, 9 OCT

The police on Wednesday said that they would expand the investigation into the alleged narcotic substance abuse case to include Malayalam film actors whose names emerged following the recent arrest of a notorious gangster and his accomplices at a luxury hotel here.

The names of actors Sreenath Bhasi and Prayaga Martin, who have both been part of several hit films, were mentioned in the custody application report submitted by Maradu police. This came after the arrest of gangster Om Prakash.

While Martin's family denied her involvement in the matter, Bhasi has not yet commented on the development.

The police reported the presence of some suspected narcotic substances in the hotel room, which had been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

A detailed investigation revealed that over 20 individuals, including film actors Bhasi and Martin, had visited Prakash at the hotel.

Speaking to reporters, Kochi City Police Commissioner Putta Vimaladitya said that the investigation is ongoing.

However, the commissioner added that they would be summoned as part of the ongoing investigation.

Prakash, who has been involved in several criminal cases, was arrested at the Maradu hotel along with his accomplices on charges of possessing narcotics. *—PTI*

MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

Shilpa, husband move HC against ED notice

MUMBAI, 9 OCT

Actor Shilpa Shetty and her businessman husband Raj Kundra have moved the Bombay High Court challenging ED's notices directing them to vacate their house in Mumbai's Juhu area and a farmhouse in Pune in connection with a money-laundering case.

The pleas came up for hearing on Wednesday before a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan.

The court issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and posted the matter for hearing on Thursday.

Their petitions challenge ED notices dated 27 September issued to Shetty and Kundra directing them to evict their residential premises here and a farmhouse in Pune within ten days in connection with a money-laundering case linked to an alleged Bitcoin fraud.

The couple's advocate Prashant Patil said that Shetty and Kundra received the eviction notices only on 3 October. He termed the notices arbitrary and illegal and sought them to be quashed.

As per the pleas, the ED had in 2018 lodged a complaint against one Amit Bhardwaj and others for an alleged Bitcoin fraud and on charges of money laundering. Both Shetty and her husband have not been named as accused in the case. *—PTI*

Businessman Raj Kundra with Actress Shilpa Shetty **PHOTO: PTI**

ASIA'S LARGEST TELESCOPE

Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) observatory, the largest imaging Cherenkov telescope in Asia, was inaugurated at Hanle in Ladakh. Located at an altitude of 4,300m, it is also the highest of its kind telescope globally. The Mumbai-based Bhabha Atomic Research Centre indigenously built the telescope with support from the Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. The telescope will allow scientists to study high-energy gamma rays, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the universe's most energetic events

PHOTO: PTI

Did Cong's internal divide lead to Haryana loss?

Four months after losing its majority in parliament for the first time in a decade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP secured a record third term in Haryana and scored its best ever performance in Kashmir, marking a dramatic turnaround.

The results of the two states' Assembly elections announced on Tuesday also represent a significant setback for the Opposition Congress party's bid to end the BJP's dominance over electoral politics in India since 2014, political analysts told Al Jazeera on Wednesday.

Congress leads the Opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) that won 234 seats in the parliamentary election, of which results were announced in June, forcing BJP – which won 240 seats in a house where the majority mark is 272 – to rely on allies to form a government.

But in Haryana, Congress lost the election despite exit polls predicting it would win comfortably amid anger against the state's BJP government among sections of people, including farmers and champion wrestlers.

India's grand old party also recorded its worst-ever performance in Jammu and Kashmir. However, Congress will still be a part of the next government in Kashmir as its regional alliance partner, the National Conference (NC), outran the BJP to secure the numbers needed to lead the next administration.

After BJP lost its parliamentary majority in June this year and had to rely on its allies' support to form the government, "Congress saw itself getting back into this 'revival momentum' in the Assembly elections", Rasheed Kidwai, a political analyst, told Al Jazeera.

"But the results proved a booster for Modi's BJP, which now has oxygen to feel more confident in New Delhi, and [the victory in Haryana] gives the BJP more heft in the important upcoming state elections."

Four key states –Delhi, Maharashtra, Bihar and Jharkhand– are scheduled to vote in a few months.

BJP's vote share in the state jumped by 3.4 percentage points to 39.89 per cent as compared with the 2019 election ***PHOTO: PTI***

The battles within

In the last parliamentary election results, Congress won five of Haryana's 10 seats – the BJP won the other five. It was a major shift from the last national election, held in 2019, when BJP swept all 10 seats.

But in the state election, they "failed owing to the internal differences between Congress's central and state leadership, and the battles within the state factions", said Asim Ali, a political researcher and columnist. As per the data from the Election Commission, BJP's vote share in the state jumped by 3.4 percentage points to 39.89 percent as compared with the 2019 election. Congress's gain was much larger – from 28.08 to 39.09 percent. However, a closer look reveals that the opposition's gains were carved out from the vote shares of other regional parties, not the BJP's support base.

As a result, BJP won 48 seats, an increase from the 40 seats it secured in 2019, while Congress secured 36, up from 31. The majority mark is 46 in the 90-member Assembly.

"We lost because of our own differences and the ego of old veterans that refuse to cede any space," said a senior politician who is an executive member of the Haryana Congress unit, requesting anonymity.

"From monopolising candidate nominations to the campaigning strategy, Haryana Congress was taken over by the Hooda family and the disappointing results are in front of us," they said, referring to former chief minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

Though the differences in the state unit were no secret, Ali, the political researcher, said the Congress's central leadership gambled by betting on Hooda's caste-based politics that appealed to voters from Haryana's dominant Jat community, which wields influence over nearly 40 seats. On the other hand, the BJP's "local level management of the election seemed to have done the maths for them", Ali added.

"The Congress's inability to course-correct paints a troubling portrait of central leadership deficit, particularly the ability to assertively push through tough changes on the state level," said Ali.

Bittersweet for the Opposition in Kashmir

In the first votes polled in Kashmir since New Delhi revoked the region's autonomy, NC emerged as the largest party, winning 42 seats in the 90-member Assembly.

The result has been hailed as a mandate against BJP's unilateral downgrading of the region's legislative powers, bureaucratic overreach, and an ongoing crackdown on civil liberties, political analyst Sheikh Showkat told Al Jazeera. The NC fought elections in alliance with Congress; the national party won six seats, including one in Jammu, its lowest tally ever in the region. BJP, on the other hand, failed to open its account in the Kashmir valley but maintained its decisive stronghold in the Jammu region, winning its individual best 29 seats – and emerging with the largest vote share of 25.5 percent overall, followed by the NC with 23.4 percent vote share. There were tepid celebrations outside the Congress office in the Kashmir valley as well. The party will be part of the upcoming government, "but in reality, they remain on the periphery and do not find resonance in Jammu and Kashmir", said Showkat, the Kashmiri political analyst.

The results of the two Assembly elections will also echo in the Congress corridors in New Delhi, said Kidwai, the political analyst, and especially for Rahul Gandhi, the scion of the Gandhi family that has ruled the country for decades and led the Congress for even longer. After making significant gains in the parliamentary elections, "Rahul wanted to advance Congress story", said Kidwai. "But the results now force them back to the alliance's story", which, he added, referred to Rahu's advancing a narrative of Congress's success on its own, and not of the INDIA alliance pushing back the BJP. Ali agreed. "Congress has singlehandedly wiped out its budding momentum post the general elections," he said.

"And it has placed itself on a weak wicket ahead of the crucial upcoming state elections" in four states where the party will be dependent on regional allies. "These results have shown that the Congress is not yet equipped to take BJP head-on," he said.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

SALAR

Can India navigate a China-dominated BRICS?

As leaders prepare for the BRICS summit in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan later this month, India appears to have a unique position within the bloc.

BRICS used to refer to Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but the group expanded in January 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On the one side are China, Russia and Iran, which have expressed strong anti-Western positions. In contrast, other members like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt maintain a delicate balance between their Western partnerships and strong economic ties with China.

For example, all BRICS members except India and Brazil are part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Even though Brazil is not officially part of the BRI, China is courting the country, as it buys around one-third of Brazilian exports.

India, however, is the only BRICS member strengthening its strategic ties with the West while maintaining a tense relationship with China.

The India-China rivalry is mainly due to simmering tensions along the de facto border between the Asian giants, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which India claims is 3,488 kilometers (2,167 miles) long and China says is shorter.

India is the only BRICS member strengthening its ties with the West while maintaining a tense relationship with China ***PHOTO: PTI***

How should India navigate BRICS for its benefit?

India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy, behind the United States and China.

"Russia is an economic basket case, there is no dynamism. South Africa and Brazil are struggling economies today. So contours within the original five have also changed," said Harsh Pant, vice president of the Observer Research Foundation, an Indian think tank.

"The entry of the new actors is making it further chaotic," Pant told DW, adding that the BRICS agenda is shifting toward extensive discussions without producing significant outcomes.

For India, which is now part of strategic alliances with the West to counter China in the Indo-Pacific — such as the "Quad" grouping — "the challenge is what do you do with a platform like BRICS because there are contradictions that are quite evident and I don't think they can be concealed," Pant said.

Sreeram Chaulia, dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs, believes that the bloc's nature is transitioning.

"Had this expansion not happened, it was just a talking shop and didn't have much value in terms of strategic or economic gains for India. But now that the expansion has happened, there is a contest and we don't want to cede this space to China," he told DW.

The nations in the expanded BRICS bloc account for over 37 per cent of global GDP — more than double that of the EU.

Countering China

China's bid to expand the original five BRICS countries to a larger circle has been seen, particularly by the European Union and the United States, as a quest for greater global influence.

"China is definitely looking at BRICS+ as a vehicle to shoot at the West and that is something they have been trying. But in this round of expansion, China did not get its full say," said Chaulia.

More recently, China also backed Pakistan's application to join BRICS which was quickly supported by Russia. However, experts say that India's arch enemy has little to no chances of being accepted within the group.

"Highly indebted countries which have been bailed out by the IMF time and again, what will they contribute to BRICS? It will become a club of beggars instead of a club of those who can help others," Chaulia said.

"I think BRICS is going to be contested and it's not going to be easy for China to steer or dominate the group but it does have a lot of bargaining chips," he said.

China is the world's largest lender, with half its lending commitments in developing nations, according to research from Stanford University.

While India's economy is roughly a fifth of the size of China's, it is the fastest-growing large economy with the largest youth population in the world.

The upcoming BRICS summit in Kazan is likely to decide on a mechanism for including more new partners — a point India has been keenly driving forward.

Courting Russia

Another point of focus for India is Russia. New Delhi has deep defense and technological ties with Moscow and sees the need to balance Beijing's influence there, some experts have said.

China, Russia present challenges to India's Modi

"China has given Russia a bulwark against the West which India is in no position to give, nor would it like to give," Pant said. "The challenge for India here is to maintain a relationship with Russia that serves its basic interest, be it defense, Central Asia or energy."

That said, Rahul Chhabra, former secretary of economic relations at India's Ministry of External Affairs, suggested that Russia may not always align with China.

"China is not a blind spot for Russia, they have their issues with them which may not come into play every time but they're there," Chhabra said.

Another chance at leadership

The BRICS bloc cannot be viewed in isolation from the other platforms available to India, according to Chhabra, who was present at the 2010 BRICS summit when South Africa was added to the fold.

He said the new expansion also gives India a platform to further its economic interests.

Chhabra emphasized that BRICS is unique in encompassing both major petroleum producers and consumers.

"With Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE now in the mix, some 40 per cent of oil trade is part of that group," he said, adding that even OPEC is just a group of producers.

"If they manage to use BRICS pay and other mechanisms to settle accounts, it will have a huge impact," Chhabra said, speaking of the pending discussion on de-dollarisation within the bloc. *—DW News*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

US claims TikTok is designed to be addictive to kids, sues app

More than a dozen states and the District of Columbia filed lawsuits against TikTok on Tuesday, saying that the popular short-form video app is designed to be addictive to kids and harms their mental health.

The lawsuits stem from a national investigation into TikTok, which was launched in March 2022 by a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from many states, including New York, California, Kentucky and New Jersey. All of the complaints were filed in state courts.

At the heart of each lawsuit is the TikTok algorithm, which powers what users see on the platform by populating the app's main "For You" feed with content tailored to people's interests. The lawsuits note TikTok design features that they say addict children to the platform, such as the ability to scroll endlessly through content, push notifications that come with built-in "buzzes" and face filters that create unattainable appearances for users.

"They've chosen profit over the health and safety, well-being and future of our children," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said at a news conference in San Francisco. "And that is not something we can accept. So we've sued."

The latest lawsuits come nearly a year after dozens of states sued Instagram parent Meta Platforms Inc. in state and federal courts for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing addictive features that keep kids hooked on their platforms.

Keeping people on the platform is "how they generate massive ad revenue", District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwalb said in an interview. "But unfortunately, that's also how they generate adverse mental health impacts on the users."

The legal challenges, which also include Google's YouTube, are part of a growing reckoning against social media companies and their effects on young people's lives. In some cases, the challenges have been coordinated in a way that resembles how states previously organised against the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries.

TikTok, though, is facing an even bigger obstacle, as its very existence in the US is in question. Under a federal law that took effect earlier this year, TikTok could be banned from the US by mid-January if its China-based parent company, ByteDance, doesn't sell the platform by then. Both TikTok and ByteDance are challenging the law at an appeals court in Washington. A panel of three judges heard oral arguments in the case last month and are expected to issue a ruling, which could be appealed to the US Supreme Court.

The latest lawsuits come nearly a year after dozens of states sued Instagram parent Meta Platforms Inc. in state and federal courts for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis

In its filings on Tuesday, the District of Columbia called the algorithm "dopamine-inducing," and said it was created to be intentionally addictive so the company could trap many young users into excessive use and keep them on its app for hours on end. TikTok does this despite knowing that these behaviours will lead to profound psychological and physiological harms, such as anxiety, depression, body dysmorphia and other long-lasting problems, the district said.

TikTok is disappointed that the lawsuits were filed after the company had been working with the attorneys general for two years on addressing to the issues, a spokesman said.

"We strongly disagree with these claims, many of which we believe to be inaccurate and misleading," the TikTok spokesman. Alex Haurek, said. "We're proud of and remain deeply committed to the work we've done to protect teens and we will continue to update and improve our product."

The social media company does not allow children under 13 to sign up for its main service and restricts some content for everyone under 18. But Washington and several other states said in their filings that children can easily bypass those restrictions, allowing them to access the service adults use despite the company's claims that its platform is safe for children.

The District of Columbia alleges TikTok is operating as an "unlicensed virtual economy" by allowing people to purchase TikTok Coins – a virtual currency within the platform – and send "Gifts" to streamers on TikTok LIVE who can cash it out for real money. TikTok takes a 50 per cent commission on these financial transactions but hasn't registered as a money transmitter with the US Treasury Department or authorities in the district, according to the complaint.

Officials say teens are frequently exploited for sexually explicit content through TikTok's LIVE streaming feature, which has allowed the app to operate essentially as a "virtual strip club" without any age restrictions. They say the cut the company gets from the financial transactions allows it to profit from exploitation.

The 14 attorneys general say the goal of their lawsuits is to stop TikTok from using these features, impose financial penalties for their alleged illegal practices and collect damages for users that have been harmed.

The use of social media among teens is nearly universal in the US and many other parts of the world. Almost all teens ages 13 to 17 in the US report using a social media platform, with about a third saying they use social media "almost constantly", according to the Pew Research Centre.

High school students who frequently use social media more commonly have persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, according to a new survey from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention conducted last year in which about 20,000 teenagers participated.

Also on Tuesday, 22 other states including Alabama, Colorado, Florida and Michigan filed an amicus brief urging a Tennessee court to force TikTok to produce documents related to a multistate investigation that those attorney general offices say TikTok is withholding or destroying. *—PTI*

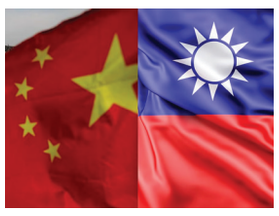


PHOTO: X

Taiwan urges China for restraint ahead of satellite launch

TAIPEI, 9 OCT

Taiwan has urged China to exercise restraint in military drills in the coming days, as Beijing prepares to launch a satellite Thursday in which the launch vehicle will pass through the airspace near Taiwan. The Ministry of National Defense (MND) said in a statement on Tuesday that China is scheduled to launch a satellite launch vehicle (SLV) from its Xichang Satellite Launch Centre on Thursday, when Taiwan celebrates its National Day. SLV will be headed toward the West Pacific passing through Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ), according to the MND. ADIZ is a self-declared area in which a country claims the right to identify, and control approaching foreign aircraft but is not part of its territorial airspace as defined by international law. *—PTI*

FBI arrests Afghan man who planned US poll day attack

WASHINGTON DC, 9 OCT

The FBI has arrested an Afghan man who officials say was inspired by the Islamic State militant organisation and was plotting an Election Day attack targeting large crowds in the US, the Justice Department said on Tuesday. Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, 27, of Oklahoma City told investigators after his arrest Monday that he had planned his attack to coincide with Election Day next month and that he and a co-conspirator expected to die as martyrs, according to charging documents. The arrest comes as the FBI confronts heightened concerns over the possibility of extremist violence on US soil. *—PTI*

Southeast Asian leaders discuss Myanmar war

VIENTIANE, 9 OCT

Southeast Asian leaders gathered Wednesday for an annual forum that will focus on the civil war in Myanmar and territorial tensions in the South China Sea, two key challenges that have tested the bloc's credibility. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Laos will be followed by two days of meetings with global powers including China, the United States and Russia, which are contending for influence in the region. ASEAN's influence has historically been limited even among its own members, but the forum has been a platform for engagement between superpowers and the region. The 10 member states of ASEAN — Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos — will also hold talks with other dialogue partners including Japan, South Korea, India and Australia *—PTI*

Boeing halts talks with union as strike continues

SEATTLE, 9 OCT

Boeing has withdrawn a contract offer that would have given striking workers 30 per cent raises over four years after talks broke down. The manufacturer said that it had boosted its offer for union workers for take-home pay and retirement benefits during two days of negotiations. "Unfortunately, the union did not seriously consider our proposals. Instead, the union made non-negotiable demands far in excess of what can be accepted if we are to remain competitive as a business," Boeing said in a prepared statement. Union said last month that Boeing had publicised its latest offer to 33,000 striking workers without first bargaining with union negotiators. he union represents factory workers who assemble some of the company's best-selling planes.*—PTI*

Israeli offensive in northern Gaza kills dozens

42,010 Palestinians have been killed according to Health Ministry

DEIR AL-BALAH, 9 OCT

A large-scale Israeli operation in northern Gaza has killed and wounded dozens of people and threatens to shut down three hospitals over a year into the war with Hamas, Palestinian officials and residents said Wednesday.

Heavy fighting is underway in Jabaliya, where Israeli forces carried out several major operations over the course of the war and then returned as militants regroup. The entire north, including Gaza City, has suffered heavy destruction and has been largely isolated by Israeli forces since late last year.

The continuing cycle of destruction and death in Gaza, unleashed by Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack on southern Israel, offers a cautionary tale as Israel expands a week-old ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon and considers a major retaliatory strike on Iran.

Residents of Jabaliya, a refugee camp dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, say heavy airstrikes and evacuation warnings have driven hundreds of people from their homes. An airstrike early Wednesday killed at least nine people, including two women and two children, according to the Al-Ahly Hospital, which received the bodies.

The entire Gaza City, has suffered heavy destruction and has been largely isolated by Israeli forces since late last year *PHOTO: PTI*

Strikes in central Gaza killed another nine people, including three children, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah.

Israel's offensive has gutted Gaza's health sector, forcing most of its hospitals to shut down and leaving the rest only partially functioning.

Israel's offensive has killed 42,010 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters. It has said women and children make up over half of the dead. The offensive has also caused staggering destruction across the territory and displaced around 90 per cent of the population of 2.3 million people, often multiple times. *—PTI*

6 stabbed in an attack in Israel

Tel Aviv, 9 Oct

At least six people were stabbed and wounded in northern Israel in what police say was a militant attack. Police said the assailant stabbed people in multiple locations in the northern city of Hadera on Wednesday before fleeing on a motorbike. Police said they later shot and "neutralized" him, indicating he was killed. They did not provide the name or nationality of the assailant.

—PTI

Protests by Imran Khan's PTI caused ₹240M damage: Report

ISLAMABAD, 9 OCT

Protests by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party over the weekend in the national capital caused damages worth Rs 240 million to private and public property, a media report said on Wednesday.

The damage assessment was mentioned in a report that the Islamabad Inspector General's office submitted to the Islamabad chief commissioner following the violent protests by supporters and workers of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) over the weekend.

Quoting the top police official's report, Geo News said, 441 safe city cameras worth Rs 140 million were damaged during the protest. Also damaged were 10 police vehicles, 31 motorcycles, and 51 gas masks.

The protestors also inflicted damages on three private vehicles and a crane. The report also mentioned that one policeman was killed and 31 sustained injuries.

It also quoted Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb as saying during a televised speech on Tuesday that the Economic Advisory Wing of his ministry assessed the economic losses of the protest at a whopping Rs 190 billion owing to the halt of economic activities.

Police officers fire tear gas to disperse the PTI workers during a protest in Islamabad, Pakistan *PHOTO: PTI*

As Pakistan prepared to host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting next week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said Khan's party will not be allowed to repeat the 2014 sit-in that had prompted cancellation of the Chinese president's visit then. PTI protest paralysed life from Friday till at least Sunday in Rawalpindi and Islamabad as the twin cities were sealed off with containers to prevent the demonstrators from entering. *—PTI*

Kamala balks at breaking with Biden on policy

NEW YORK, 9 OCT

Democratic candidate and US Vice President Kamala Harris wanted to help voters get to know her better with a cascade of media appearances on Tuesday, but the most lasting impression might have been her unwillingness to break with Joe Biden.

Asked on ABC's "The View" how she would be different from the President she's served under for four years, Harris said "we're obviously two different people" and "I will bring those sensibilities to how I lead". The exchange encapsulated Harris' struggle to portray herself as a candidate who can deliver the change voters crave while also remaining loyal to the current administration. Some Harris aides winced as gleeful Republicans circulated clips of her response and Donald Trump swiped at her in a social media post, calling it "her dumbest answer so far." Harris used her Tuesday appearance on "The View" to discuss her proposal to have Medicare cover in-home care for elderly, helping to relieve the burden faced by families. *—PTI*

N Korea vows to block border with South Korea

SEOUL, 9 OCT

North Korea said Wednesday it will permanently block its border with South Korea and build frontline defence structures to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and US forces, while not announcing an expected constitutional revision to formally designate South Korea its principal enemy and codify new national borders.

While the moves were likely a pressure tactic, it's unclear how they will affect ties with South Korea since cross-border travel and exchanges have been halted for years.

North Korea's military said it will "completely cut off roads and railways" linked to South Korea and "fortify the relevant areas of our side with strong defence structures," according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

The North's military called its steps a "self-defensive measure for inhibiting war and defending the security" of North Korea. It said that "the hostile forces are getting ever more reckless in their confrontational hysteria." It cited what it called various war exercises in South Korea, the deployment of US strategic assets and its rivals' harsh rhetoric.

South Korea's military said later Wednesday that it won't tolerate any attempt by North Korea to change the status quo. It said South Korea will "overwhelmingly punish" North Korea if it launches provocations.

A South Korean military statement said North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have threatened peace on the Korean Peninsula.

—PTI

MOTH TRAVELS 7,000KM

A photographer accidentally brought a new type of moth to the UK in her suitcase. The moth had travels 7,000 km from Guyana, South America to Wales. The moth is named as Carmenta brachyclados

PHOTO: X

WAR ON

Russian forces dropped about four guided bombs on the northeastern city, about 30km from the border with Russia *PHOTO: X@BOHUSLAVSKAKATE*

At least 2 killed in latest Russian attacks on Kharkiv

MOSCOW, 9 OCT

Russian attacks on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-biggest city, have killed at least two people and injured more than 30, including a teenager.

Russian forces dropped about four guided bombs on the northeastern city, about 30km from the border with Russia, on Tuesday afternoon, Governor Oleh Syniehubov said.

One of the bombing attacks killed a man and a woman who were walking along the street, he said, adding that at least three other people were injured.

An earlier attack injured 28 people, including a 16-year-old, Syniehubov said. The authorities were working to verify the type of weapon used in that incident.

Syniehubov and Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said a civilian production facility had been hit. Terekhov said there had also been a fire.

Kharkiv has been a frequent target of Russian attacks since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Last week, a Russian guided bomb attack on the city struck a five-storey apartment block, injuring 10 people.

There were several attacks on the city in September.

Three people were killed when a Russian guided bomb hit an apartment building as world leaders were due to meet at the United Nations in New York.

And dozens were hurt after a Russian missile struck a shopping mall and a sports centre at the beginning of the month.

Ukraine also reported that civilians were killed in Russian attacks on the south and east of the country on Tuesday.

In the east of the country, where the fighting is most intense, officials said that a Russian attack killed one person and injured six others in the town of Kostiantynivka.

—PTI

People flee Florida as Hurricane Milton takes aim

TAMPA, 9 OCT

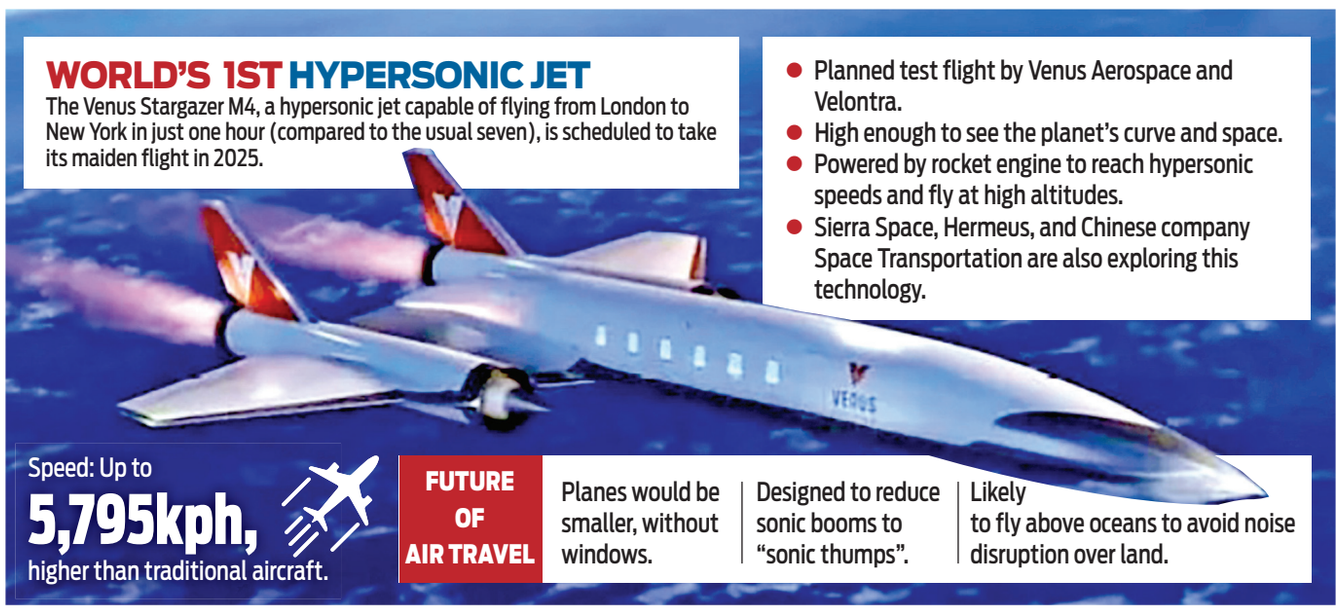
Fearful Florida residents streamed out of the Tampa Bay region ahead of what could be a once-in-a-century direct hit from Hurricane Milton, as crews worked furiously to prevent furniture, appliances and other waterlogged wreckage from the last big storm from becoming deadly projectiles in this one.

The preparations marked the last chance for millions of people in the Tampa metro area to prepare for lethal storm surges, ferocious winds and possible tornadoes in a place that has narrowly avoided a head-on blow from a major storm for generations.

That path would largely spare other states ravaged by Helene, which killed at least 230 people on its path from Florida to the Carolinas.

Meanwhile, A massive wildfire engulfed Wyoming's Bighorn National Forest last week and has now expanded to cover over 73,000 acres as of Tuesday, according to the US Forest Service.

Approximately 829 personnel and firefighters have been deployed on the site, and efforts are being made to control the situation and protect nearby communities, the Big Goose municipal watershed, and structures in the Big Goose drainage. *—Agencies*


WORLD'S 1ST HYPERSONIC JET
The Venus Stargazer M4, a hypersonic jet capable of flying from London to New York in just one hour (compared to the usual seven), is scheduled to take its maiden flight in 2025.
Planned test flight by Venus Aerospace and Velontra.
High enough to see the planet's curve and space.
Powered by rocket engine to reach hypersonic speeds and fly at high altitudes.
Sierra Space, Hermeus, and Chinese company Space Transportation are also exploring this technology.
Speed: Up to
5,795kph,
higher than traditional aircraft.
FUTURE OF AIR TRAVEL
Planes would be smaller, without windows.
Designed to reduce sonic booms to "sonic thumps".
Likely to fly above oceans to avoid noise disruption over land.

FINE OF $5M

Brazil lifts ban on Elon Musk's X

BRAZILIA, 9 OCT

Brazil's Supreme Court has lifted a ban on Elon Musk's X after the platform was blocked amid a dispute over disinformation.

"I authorise the immediate return of the activities" of X, Judge Alexandre de Moraes said in his ruling, after the company paid millions of dollars in fines for failing to comply with a series of court orders.

He gave Brazil's communications regulator 24 hours to make the platform accessible again.

Through its Global Affairs account, X said it was proud to return to Brazil, adding that it would "continue to defend freedom of speech, within the boundaries of the law" in the countries where it operates.

- X was suspended in Brazil, one of its largest and most-coveted markets, at the end of August in a standoff over online disinformation related to Brazil's 2022 election campaign

X was suspended in Brazil, one of its largest and most-coveted markets, at the end of August in a standoff over online disinformation related to Brazil's 2022 election campaign. X had also failed to name a legal representative in the country, as required by law.

After Moraes blocked X, Musk lashed out at the judge, calling him an "evil dictator" and dubbing him "Voldemort" after the villain from the Harry Potter series.

Moraes, for his part, accused the platform of undermining democracy by allowing disinformation to flourish – a position backed by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who declared that the state would not "be intimidated by individuals, companies or digital platforms that believe themselves to be above the law".

X eventually complied with all of Moraes's demands in order to have the suspension lifted.

Last week, the judge confirmed that the company had also settled fines amounting to about USD5.2million.

—Courtesy, Al-Jazeera

Gold prices fall by ₹600; silver tumbles to ₹2,800

MUMBAI, 9 OCT

Gold prices depreciated for the second straight day by Rs 600 to Rs 77,700 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday amid muted domestic demand. On Tuesday, the precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams. Silver also tumbled Rs 2,800 to Rs 91,200 per kg against Rs 94,000 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity plunged Rs 600 to Rs 77,300 per 10g. Traders said muted demand in the domestic demand led to the fall in prices of the yellow metal. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery rose Rs 29 or 0.04 per cent to Rs 75,190 per 10g. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 1 paisa to close at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 9 OCT

The rupee traded in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by just 1 paisa at 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, after the Reserve Bank of India kept its key interest rate unchanged and shifted its stance to 'neutral' that may lead to a cut in benchmark rates in forthcoming policies. Forex traders said the Reserve Bank's monetary policy action was in line with street expectations. Moreover, a muted trend in domestic markets and positive US dollar weighed on investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.92 and finally settled for the day at 83.96 (provisional), higher by 1 paisa over its previous close of 83.97 against the dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.09 per cent to 102.63 points. *—PTI*

India to get 3K hrs of Warner Bros Discover content

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Global entertainment firm Warner Bros. Discovery on Wednesday said it plans to deliver over 3,000 hours of fresh content by the end of this year in India across its linear channels and video streaming platform 'discovery+'. The company plans to significantly enhance programming across discovery+ and its linear channels, including Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and TLC, with a focus on a diverse and distinctive mix of local originals and global titles in India, Warner Bros. Discovery said in a statement. Moreover, the revamped DTamil channel will showcase top global entertainment content, including Hollywood blockbuster movies and series, in Tamil language, it added. This diverse content library not only boosts overall viewership and engagement but also underscores the brand's commitment to bringing global content to India and creating original stories that highlight historic, cultural and grassroots narratives, the company said. *—PTI*

NCLT initiates insolvency case against Syska

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) directed to initiate insolvency proceedings against Syska LED Lights, admitting the plea filed by its operational creditor Sunstar Industries. Syska LED Lights, part of Pune-based SSK Group, operates in segments such as LED lights, personal care appliances, mobile accessories, home appliances, and smart watches. The Mumbai bench of NCLT admitted the plea filed by Sunstar Industries, claiming total dues of Rs 7.70 crore and has appointed Debashis Nanda as the interim resolution professional suspending the board of Syska LED Lights, as per the provisions of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC). It rejected Syska LED Lights' claims of a pre-existing dispute. *—PTI*

Amid geo-political tensions, RBI says India's growth intact

It also says geo-political risks may lead to rise in crude oil prices

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Amidst concerns over geo-political scenario, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday asserted that India's growth story remains "intact" as its fundamentals drivers - consumption and investment demand - are gaining momentum.

However, it also highlighted concerns about the geo-political risks and the weather-related shocks along with its adverse impact on commodity prices particularly crude oil where India's import dependence is very high.

Agricultural output is expected to improve with rains favourable during the kharif season and prospects for the rabi season improving because of better water reservoir position.

"Inflation is on a declining path, although we still have a distance to cover," Das said unveiling the policy in a televised address.

Globally, risks and uncertainties persist, with escalating tensions in the Middle East, weather uncertainties and outcome of US elections in focus - reasons why the RBI took a cautious approach and kept its powder dry.

RBI Guv Shaktikanta Das sounded a warning to NBFC sector *PHOTO: PTI*

The monetary policy action of Wednesday reflects the monetary policy committee (MPC) assessment that, at the current juncture, it would be appropriate to have greater flexibility and optionality to act in sync with the evolving conditions and the outlook.

Suman Chowdhury, Chief Economist and Executive Director, Acuité Ratings & Research, said while the MPC has not provided any clear guidance on the rate cuts, it is likely that it will go for a rate cut in December this year or February 2025, provided the inflationary environment is stable and the headline inflation is consistently within 4.5 per cent in the next few months.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and head of Research and Outreach, ICRA Ltd, said MPC review prudently prioritised flexibility, by changing the stance.

"This has opened the door for a potential rate cut in December 2024, if the lurking risks to inflation, both domestic and global, do not materialise. In our view, the Indian rate cut cycle will be fairly shallow, restricted to 50 basis points over two policy reviews."

The RBI Governor sounded a warning to the NBFC sector.

Aggressive growth in some asset classes among NBFCs and specifically in the microfinance sector can pose risks for financial stability going forward, he warned.

RBI is also closely monitoring likelihood of stress buildup in a few unsecured loan segments like loans for consumption purposes, microfinance loans and credit card outstandings, Das said adding the central bank may take measures as may be considered necessary.

"Banks and NBFCs, on their part, need to carefully assess their individual exposures in these areas, both in terms of size and quality. Their underwriting standards and post-sanction monitoring have to be robust," he said, calling for continued attention to potential risks from inoperative deposit accounts. *—PTI*

ITC, NESTLE TOP GAINERS

Stock markets close lower on fag-end selling

MUMBAI, 9 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty pared early gains to settle lower on Wednesday due to late selling in index major Reliance Industries, ITC and HDFC Bank even as the RBI took the first step towards a rate cut in its monetary policy review.

Erasing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 167.71 points or 0.21 per cent to close at 81,467.1. During the day, it surged 684.4 points or 0.83 per cent to hit an intraday high of 82,319.21.

The NSE Nifty dropped 31.20 points or 0.12 per cent to end at 24,981.95. In the intraday trade, it jumped 220.9 points or 0.88 per cent to hit a hit of 25,234.05. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its key interest rate unchanged on Wednesday but took the first step towards a rate cut as it eased its relatively hawkish policy stance to 'neutral'.

The monetary policy committee, which included three RBI officials and an equal number of new external members, voted five-to-one to keep the benchmark repurchase or repo rate - which governs the interest rate of home, auto, corporate and other loans - at 6.5 per cent for a 10th straight policy meeting.

Among the 30 Sensex companies, ITC, Nestle India, Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

On the contrary, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Bharti Airtel were among the Global oil benchmark Brent Crude climbed 0.87 per cent to USD 77.85 a barrel in futures trade. *—PTI*

'India's pharma exports to sustain momentum despite global slowdown'

PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Exports of India's pharmaceutical and meditech sectors are expected to sustain the growth momentum in the ongoing fiscal despite a slowdown in the global economy, a senior government official said on Wednesday. With the government revving up support for drug development in India, as many as 16 blockbuster molecules targeted for a wide range of therapeutic areas, including cancer, diabetes, HIV and tuberculosis, are in the pipeline to be produced in India, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Secretary Arunish Chawla told reporters on the sidelines of CII Pharma and Life Sciences summit here.

He said, "In the first four months of this year, these exports have now become the fourth largest merchandise export item for the Indian economy."

On support of drug development in India, he said, "We've done both studies and applied research to identify blockbuster molecules and blockbuster drugs in the traditional pharma space and in the new rising biotech and biosimilar space." These molecules are both small and large molecules aimed at most therapeutic segments including, cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, HIV and anticoagulants, among others, he added.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has already granted approvals to some of the molecules, Chawla said, adding, "going further, we would also be working on their value chains upstream the way we have focused on bulk drugs as upstream value chains of chemical entities." *—PTI*

GOVT ALLOWS FORTIFIED RICE SUPPLY TILL 2028

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

The government on Wednesday decided to continue the supply of free fortified rice under the food law and other welfare schemes till 2028 with an outlay of Rs 17,082 crore, a move aimed at reducing anaemia and micro-nutrient deficiency.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Cabinet approved the continuation of the supply of free fortified rice under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) and other welfare schemes from July 2024 to December 2028, the government said.

Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the total financial scheme to supply free fortified rice will be Rs 17,082 crore, fully funded by the Centre. *—PTI*

IN 7 CITIES

Adani ties up with Thales to improve operations at airports

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

European major Thales will deploy a smart digital platform at seven airports operated by the Adani Group that will centrally host all the necessary applications to improve overall airport management, security and passenger experience.

Thales and Adani Airport Holdings Ltd have announced a strategic partnership under which the company has bagged the contract to deploy the innovative Airport Operation Control Centre (APOC) at the seven airports— Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mangaluru and Thiruvananthapuram, according to a release on Wednesday. The company, which provides advanced technologies, has already deployed the Fly to Gate solution at seven airports since early 2024. It also said the APOC platform will collect operational data from integrated airports sub-systems and sensors while complying with standards of privacy.

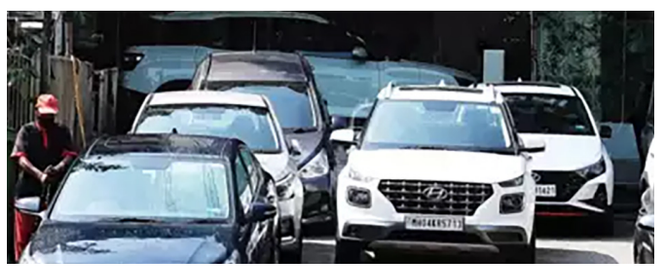
This data will be then intelligently processed using automation, big data analytics and robust Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms. The solution which will be deployed soon will anticipate and reduce unplanned resource shortages, hence increasing predictability and global efficiency, the release added.

It will also reduce passenger processing time up to 30 per cent. *—PTI*

The solution will also reduce passenger processing time up to 30 per cent *PHOTO: PTI*

Hyundai to launch India's largest IPO of Rs 27,870 crore

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT



South Korean automaker's Indian arm Hyundai Motor India Ltd will launch the largest initial public offering (IPO) in the country's history next week, aiming to raise Rs 27,870 crore (about USD 3.3 billion).

This IPO will surpass the Rs 21,000 crore offering by Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) in May 2022.

Apart from these two, the biggest initial share-sales in India include One97 Communications (Paytm), which mobilised Rs 18,300 crore in November 2021, followed by Coal India's Rs 15,199 crore in October 2010, Reliance Power's Rs 11,563 crore in January 2008, and General Insurance Corporation of India's Rs 11,176 crore in October 2017. Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) has set a price band of Rs 1,865 to Rs 1,960 per share for the offering, valuing the automaker at Rs 1.6 lakh crore (about USD 19 billion). The offering will open for public subscription on 15 October and conclude on 17 October. Anchor investors will bid on 14 October.

With this massive IPO, Hyundai Motor India seeks to build on its growing market presence and capitalise on strong demand for its vehicles in the country. The offering is expected to draw significant investor interest.

The company's proposed IPO is entirely an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of 142,194,700 equity shares by promoter Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component.

This development marks a significant milestone for the Indian industry, as it is the first initial share sale of an automaker in over two decades, following Japanese carmaker Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003. *—PTI*

Govt plans new PLI scheme for drones

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

The government plans to come out with a new Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the drones sector that will be more effective in terms of implementation, documentation and other aspects.

Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam on Wednesday said the government is looking at moving to the next PLI scheme for the drones sector.

PHOTO: PTI

The first PLI scheme for drones, introduced in 2021 with an outlay of Rs 120 crore for three financial years starting from 2021-22, has ended.

While acknowledging that some procedures under the first scheme were onerous on start-ups and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the drone sector, HE said the government will look at a more efficient PLI scheme in terms of implementation, documentation and the processes that are adopted.

According to Vualnam, the drone sector has to be segregated into three segments -- those for civilian use, security/defence forces use, and the rogue or unregulated use of drones. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Kalpataru to sell stake in Vindhyachal Expressway

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Kalpataru Projects International Ltd (KPIL) on Wednesday signed definitive agreements with Actis Atlantic Holdings to sell its 100 per cent stake in Vindhyachal Expressway for Rs 775 crore.

The completion of sale is subject to necessary approvals and is expected to be completed within 15 months from the date of signing the pact.

KPIL is one of the largest specialised EPC companies engaged in power transmission and distribution, buildings and factories, water supply and irrigation, railways, oil and gas pipeline, among others. *—PTI*

TROUBLE MOUNTS

Google loses final EU court appeal against euro 2.4 billion fine

LONDON, 9 OCT

Google lost its final legal challenge on Tuesday against a European Union (EU) penalty for giving its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results, ending a long-running antitrust case that came with a whopping fine.

The European Union's Court of Justice upheld a lower court's decision, rejecting the company's appeal against the 2.4 billion Euro penalty from the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer.

The commission punished the Silicon Valley giant in 2017 for unfairly directing visitors to its own Google Shopping service to the detriment of competitors. It was one of three multibillion-Euro fines that the commission imposed on Google in the previous decade as Brussels started ramping up its crackdown on the tech industry.

Google is still appealing the other two EU penalties *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Google said it made changes in 2017 to comply with the commission's decision requiring it to treat competitors equally. It started holding auctions for shopping search listings that it would bid for alongside other comparison-shopping services.

Google is still appealing the other two EU antitrust penalties, which involved its Android mobile operating system and AdSense advertising platform. The company was dealt a setback in the Android case when the EU General Court upheld the commission's 4.125 billion Euro fine in a 2022 decision. Its initial appeal against a 1.49 billion Euro fine in the AdSense case has yet to be decided.

Those three cases foreshadowed expanded efforts by regulators worldwide to crack down on the tech industry. The EU has since opened more investigations into Big Tech companies and drafted new laws to clean up social media platforms and regulate artificial intelligence. *—PTI*

US asks court to break up Google to end online search monopoly

The US Department of Justice is considering asking a federal judge to force Google to sell parts of its business in order to eliminate its online search monopoly. In a landmark case, a judge found in August that Google, which processes 90 per cent of US internet searches, had built an illegal monopoly. In a late court filing on Tuesday, federal prosecutors also said the judge could ask the court to open the underlying data Google uses to power its ubiquitous search engine and artificial intelligence products to competitors. The Justice Department might also ask the court to end Google's payments to have its search engine pre-installed or set as the default on new devices.. *—PTI*

upGrad Mumba Masters stun leaders PBG

LONDON, 9 OCT

In a surprising turn of events, upGrad Mumba Masters delivered a shocking 9-10 defeat to tournament leaders PBG Alaskan Knights, disrupting their path to direct qualification for the finals of the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League here on Wednesday. The win revived Mumba's hopes of reaching the knockout stage. The seventh day of the tournament saw PBG, playing as Black, face Mumba Masters, who had won only two out of seven matches so far. With three rounds left (including this one), PBG had the opportunity to secure their place in the finals. For Mumba, this was a must-win match to keep their finals hopes alive. The opening game between the two teams ended in a narrow 8-5 victory for PBG, with just one decisive result: PBG's Nihal Sarin pulled off a crucial win against Raunak Sadhwani on the prodigy board.—*PTI*

Root and Brook hit big centuries against Pak

MULTAN, 9 OCT

Responding to Pakistan's mammoth first-innings score of 556 after the best part of two days in the dirt was always going to require something special from England. Not only did they respond emphatically to end day three of this first Test on 492 for 3, trailing by just 64, but they did so in historic fashion. Joe Root became England's leading Test run-scorer, passing Sir Alastair Cook's record of 12,473 runs on his way to a 35th Test hundred. It was typical Root, unassuming and busy with just 12 fours, set against Harry Brook's boisterous 141* from 173 deliveries, picking up where he left off from a Player-of-the-Series performance on the 2022 tour of Pakistan, with his fourth century against them in as many matches.
—*AP*

PBG Alaskan one win away from GCL final

LONDON, 20 SEPT

PBG Alaskan Knights were placed at the top spot with 18 match points and a win away from securing their place in the final of the Global Chess League (GCL) here. The Knights have so far registered six victories in seven matches and are six points ahead of Triveni and Alpine SG Pipers. The Knights have so far registered six victories in seven matches and are six points ahead of Triveni and Alpine SG Pipers. Despite their comfortable standing, the Knights' Anish Giri, on top board, was cautious about his team's position. "It's not done yet, we still need to get to the final and win. But so far it's going well and I'm happy with everything, that's for sure," he said.
—*PTI*

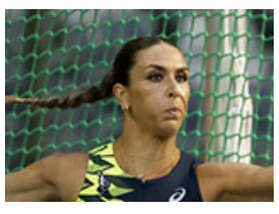


PHOTO: TWITTER

Valarie named Delhi Half Marathon's ambassador

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

Two-time Olympic gold-winning American discus thrower Valerie Allman was on Wednesday named the international event ambassador of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon to be held here on 20 October. Allman threw 69.50 meters in the Paris Games this year to set a new American record and win the gold medal. In the previous Tokyo Games, she had finished at the top of the podium with a throw of 68.98 meters. Her feat ended USA's wait for a gold in discus throw which they had last won in 2008. Allman, whose personal best is of 71.46 meters, is also a two-time World Championship medallist, clinching the silver in 2023 and a bronze in 2022.—*PTI*

All-round SA crush Scotland by 80 runs

With this win, SA jumped to the top of Group B

DUBAI, 9 OCT

South Africa dominated Scotland in all departments of the game to register a commanding 80-run win in a Women's T20 World Cup match here on Wednesday.

Batting first, South Africa posted a strong 166 for five in the allotted 20 overs. In reply, the Scots failed miserably with the bat and were all out for 86 in 17.5 overs. Only two Scotland batters could reach double digits, reflecting their woes.

Nonkululeko Mlaba (3/12) was the most successful bowler for South Africa while there were two wickets apiece for Chloe Tryon (2/22) and Nadine de Klerk (2/15).

With this win, their second in three matches, South Africa jumped to the top of Group B standings as Scotland occupied the last position.

Skipper Laura Wolvaardt and her opening partner Tazmin Brits gave South Africa a perfect start, stitching a partnership of 64 runs in only 7.3 overs.

Wolvaardt smashed her way to a 27-ball 40, an innings that was laced with five fours and a six, while Brits hit 43 in 35 deliveries, striking five boundaries and one maximum.

Thanks to the fireworks in the power play and overs after that, South Africa went past 50 in quick time and were 83 for one at the halfway stage of their innings.

South Africa dominated Scotland in all departments of the game
PHOTO: PTI

TODAY'S MATCH

- **Australia vs Pakistan**
  Time: 7.30 pm

ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Marizanne Kapp then held center stage and blazed her way to 43 in just 24 balls with six fours.

Brief scores:
South Africa 166 for 5 (Kapp 43, Brits 43, Carter 1-17) beat Scotland 86 (Fraser 14, Mlaba 3-12, de Klerk 2-15) by 80 runs.

—*PTI*

India scored 172/3 against SL

India posted an imposing 172 for three against Sri Lanka in their Women's T20 World Cup match here on Wednesday. Opting to bat, India had a solid opening with Smriti Mandhana (50 off 38 balls) and Shafali Verma (43 off 40 balls) putting on 98 runs in just under 13 overs. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur then carried on the momentum with a blistering 52 off 27 balls to help India finish on a strong note.

Nitish Reddy and Rinku
PHOTO: PTI

Nitish, Rinku power India to 221/9 vs B'desh

NEW DELHI, 9 OCT

A sensational 108-run partnership off 48 balls between Nitish Reddy and Rinku Singh was the highlight of India's innings in the second T20I in Delhi. After India lost three wickets in the Powerplay in Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson and Suryakumar Yadav, Rinku

India scored a formidable 221 for nine against Bangladesh in their second T20 International here on Wednesday.

Asked to bat, Sanju Samson started the India innings with a couple of boundaries but failed to carry on for long, while Abhishek Sharma and skipper Suryakumar Yadav too did not last long enough as the hosts slipped to 41 for three in the sixth over.

Nitish Reddy (76 off 34 balls) and Rinku Singh (53 off 29 balls) led India's recovery with a superb partnership of 108 runs for the fourth wicket.

Hardik Pandya then smashed a 19-ball 32 to consolidate India's innings.

Brief scores:
India: 221/9 in 20 overs (Nitish Reddy 76, Rinku Singh 53, Hardik Pandya 32). —*PTI*

MAIDEN WIN

The Indian women's TT players created history by winning at the Asian Table Tennis Championships
PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Asian Table Tennis C'ship: India bags medals

ASTANA, 9 OCT

The Indian women's TT players on Wednesday created history by winning their first-ever medal a bronze at the Asian Table Tennis Championships here after losing to Japan 1-3 in the semifinals.

This is India's maiden medal in the women's team event at the Asian Championships.

Going first, India's Ayhika Mukherjee gave a tough fight to Japan's Miwa Harimoto before losing 2-3 (8-11 11-9 8-11 13-11 7-11).

The highly-rated Manika Batra leveled the scores after notching up a 3-0 (11-6 11-5 11-8) win over Satsuki Odo in the second match.

Next in charge, Sutirtha Mukherjee handed Japan the lead, losing 0-3 (9-11 4-11 13-15) against Mima Ito.

The Indian men's table tennis team assured itself of its third consecutive bronze medal at the Asian Championships, overcoming a gritty Kazakhstan 3-1 in the quarterfinals here on Wednesday.

The medal in the men's team event was secured after the women lost to Japan in the semifinals to end with a historic bronze.

In the men's quarterfinal, World No. 60 Manav Thakkar set the tone, delivering a stunning upset by dismantling Kazakhstan's top-ranked player, World No. 41 Kirill Gerassimenko, in a dominant 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-6) sweep. Gerassimenko, normally a formidable opponent, struggled to contain Thakkar's aggressive style, handing India an early lead.

—*PTI*

Sinner avenges Shanghai defeat to Shelton

SHANGHAI, 9 OCT

Jannik Sinner avenged his defeat to Ben Shelton in the fourth round of last year's Shanghai Masters with a 6-4, 7-6 (1) to spoil the 22-year-old American's birthday on Wednesday.

Like last year, the duel again featured some incredible shot-making and serving dominance but this time the 23-year-old Italian prevailed to improve his record against Shelton to 4-1.

He will play fifth-ranked Daniil Medvedev, who earlier beat long-time rival Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (3), 6-3, in a match where the Greek player launched into a minutes-long rant against the chair umpire Fergus Murphy over a time violation call and initially refused to continue playing."You have never played tennis in your life.

You have no clue about tennis, it seems like," Tsitsipas said to Murphy. "You've had no career. You probably played serve-and-volley every single time."Anyways, tennis is a physical sport and we need some time over there. You have to show some compassion because you aren't showing any."It's a physical sport.

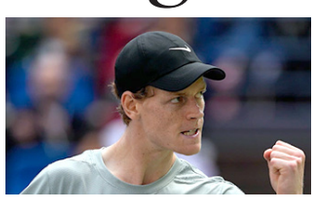
You seem like you have no idea what you're doing," Tsitsipas continued as the crowd began to slow clap.In a similar incident the day prior, Frances Tiafoe cursed repeatedly at a chair umpire after losing his third-round match and later apologized. Alcaraz needed all his shot-making abilities to outmaneuver the 38-year-old Monfils, with the 21-year-old Spaniard making 22 winners and taking a break in each set to clinch the match in 87 minutes.

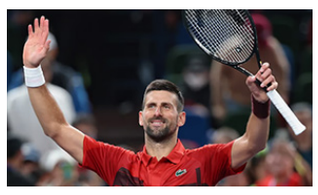
Novak Djokovic continued his pursuit of a 100th tour-level title with an impressive 6-1, 6-2 win over Flavio Cobolli at the Shanghai Masters, advancing to the fourth round.

This match marked a stark contrast to his earlier encounter against American player Michael Michelsen, as Djokovic showcased his dominance in their first meeting.

From the beginning, I had a clear gameplan of what I needed to do, stay aggressive.

—*PTI*





Jannik Sinner, Alcaraz and Djokovic
PHOTO: @ROLEXSHMASTERS

Jürgen Klopp
PHOTO: @KLOPPO

Klopp to become Red Bull's global head of soccer

LIVERPOOL, 9 OCT

Jürgen Klopp was announced as the global head of soccer for the Red Bull group on Wednesday in what will be his first job since leaving Premier League giant Liverpool earlier this year.

Klopp will assume the role with the Red Bull organization – which owns several clubs including RB Leipzig in Germany, RB Salzburg in Austria, and New York Red Bulls in the US – on January 1, 2025. "After almost 25 years on the sideline, I could not be more excited to get involved in a project like this," Klopp said in a press release. "The role may have changed but my passion for football and the people who make the game what it is has not. "By joining Red Bull at a global level, I want to develop, improve, and support the incredible football talent that we have at our disposal.

"I see my role primarily as a mentor for the coaches and management of the Red Bull clubs," he added, "but ultimately, I am one part of an organization that is unique, innovative, and forward-looking. As I said, this could not excite me more." In his new role with Red Bull, Klopp won't be involved in the day-to-day running of the network of clubs but will instead "focus on supporting. —*PTI*

Sen enters second round of Arctic Open

VANTAA, 9 OCT

India's star shuttler Lakshya Sen progressed to the men's singles round of 16 at the Arctic Open Super 500 tournament after his opponent Rasmus Gemke withdrew from the opening round match here on Wednesday.

Sen, who lost out on a maiden Olympic medal in Paris after defeat in the bronze medal play-off contest, will be up against the winner between seventh seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei and qualifier Arnaud Merkle of France in the next round.

Qualifier Kiran George is the only other Indian in action on Wednesday.

He will take on Tzu Wei Wang of Chinese Taipei later in the day.

Earlier on Tuesday, rising Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod continued her impressive form this year, pulling off a stunning upset against world No 23 Sung Shuo Yun of Chinese Taipei to advance to the women's singles pre-quarterfinals.

The 23-year-old southpaw, who clinched her first title in over two years at the Azerbaijan International in February, showed her resilience in a hard-fought match, winning 21-19, 24-22 in 57 minutes. —*PTI*

Youth Tests: India U19 completes clean sweep vs Australia

CHENNAI, 9 OCT

Debutant off-spinner Anmoljeet Singh and leg-spinner Mohamed Enaan picked 16 out of 20 Australian wickets as India U-19 comfortably won by an innings and 120 runs in the second Youth Test to complete a 2-0 series sweep here on Wednesday.

Australia Colts lost as many as 17 wickets on the third day after commencing on their overnight score of 142 for 3 in reply to India's massive first-innings total of 492. The visitors were all out for 277 in their first essay with skipper Oliver Peake (117 off 143 balls) and keeper Alex Lee Young (66) adding 166 for the fourth wicket. After Lee Young was dismissed, the last six wickets fell for 59 runs.

Kerala boy Enaan (4/60 in 22.2 overs), who had once attended Saqlain Mushtaq's clinic in Dubai, and Ludhiana's Anmoljeet (4/72 in 24 overs), who hero worships Harbhajan Singh, were the wreckers-in-chief.

In four-day cricket, the follow-on can be enforced if the team batting second is trailing by more than 150 runs.

India U-19 team players pose with the trophy after winning the 2nd Test cricket match against Australia U-19
PHOTO: PTI

After being enforced to follow-on, Anmoljeet, who had taken an astounding 65 wickets in the Vijay Merchant (U-16) Trophy in the 2023 season, came back to get 5 for 32 in 13.3 overs as Australia were skittled out for 95 in 31.3 overs. —*PTI*

India U-19 had a lead of 115 runs.

INDIA TOUR

Williamson to miss 1st Test of NZ

AUCKLAND, 9 OCT

Senior batter Kane Williamson is set to miss the initial part of the upcoming three-Test series in India starting on 16 October due to a groin strain, with New Zealand naming Mark Chapman as his cover in the 17-man squad here on Wednesday.

Williamson, who is dealing with a groin strain, will delay his departure to India where New Zealand will play three Tests at Bengaluru, Pune, and Mumbai.

While senior batting all-rounder Michael Bracewell has been roped in only for the first Test in Bengaluru, spinner Ish Sodhi will be available only for the second and third Tests.

Tom Latham will be leading the Kiwis after Tim Southee stepped aside from the leadership role a few days ago.

"Williamson experienced groin discomfort during the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle and will require a period of rehabilitation before joining the Blackcaps Test squad in India," New Zealand Cricket said on their website.

New Zealand selector Sam Wells said the decision to delay Williamson's departure to India was to give the former skipper more time to rest.

"The advice we've received is that the best course of action is for Kane to rest and rehabilitate now rather than risk aggravating the injury," said Wells.

"We're hopeful that if the rehabilitation goes to plan Kane will be available for the latter part of the tour. While it's disappointing to not have Kane available from the start of the tour, it provides an opportunity for someone else to play a role in an important series," he added.

Chapman averages above 42 in first-class cricket in 44 matches but is yet to make his Test debut.

"We believe Mark (Chapman) is one of our best players of spin and has a proven track record in the sub-continent," said Wells.

"Mark has displayed an ability to play spin proactively in the international arena, and combined with his excellent first-class record, we see him as someone who can succeed in the type of conditions we expect to encounter in India," he added.

Bracewell will return home after the first Test for the birth of his second child and will be replaced by Sodhi.

While the opening Test will be played at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium from October 16-20, the second will be held at the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Stadium in Gahunje, Pune from 24-28 October.

The third and final Test will be held at the iconic Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai from 1-5 November. —*PTI*

New stadium gives Real Madrid a headache

MADRID, 9 OCT

Real Madrid's revamp of its historic Santiago Bernabeu stadium has become a problem for the Spanish football club, with locals protesting against noise from concerts and the permanent construction works.

The stadium began hosting concerts again earlier this year after it completed a years-long revamp that included an undulating metal roof, new lighting, shops, VIP areas, and a retractable pitch.

The goal is to allow the venue, inaugurated in 1947 as a traditional football pitch, to be used as a year-round entertainment hub.

Pop megastar Taylor Swift and Grammy-winning Colombian singer Karol G are among the big names who have performed at the refurbished stadium this year. The stadium is owned by Real Madrid, whose president, Florentino Perez, is one of Spain's richest men.

PHOTO: @REALMADRIDEN

The wealthy Chamartin neighborhood in northern Madrid where the stadium is located used to be quiet, except on match days.

Now residents complain of noise during concerts and rehearsals that far exceeds legal limits, and of drunken concertgoers urinating in doorways. Luis Eusa, a university student, said his grandparents' apartment, which is across the street from the stadium. —*PTI*